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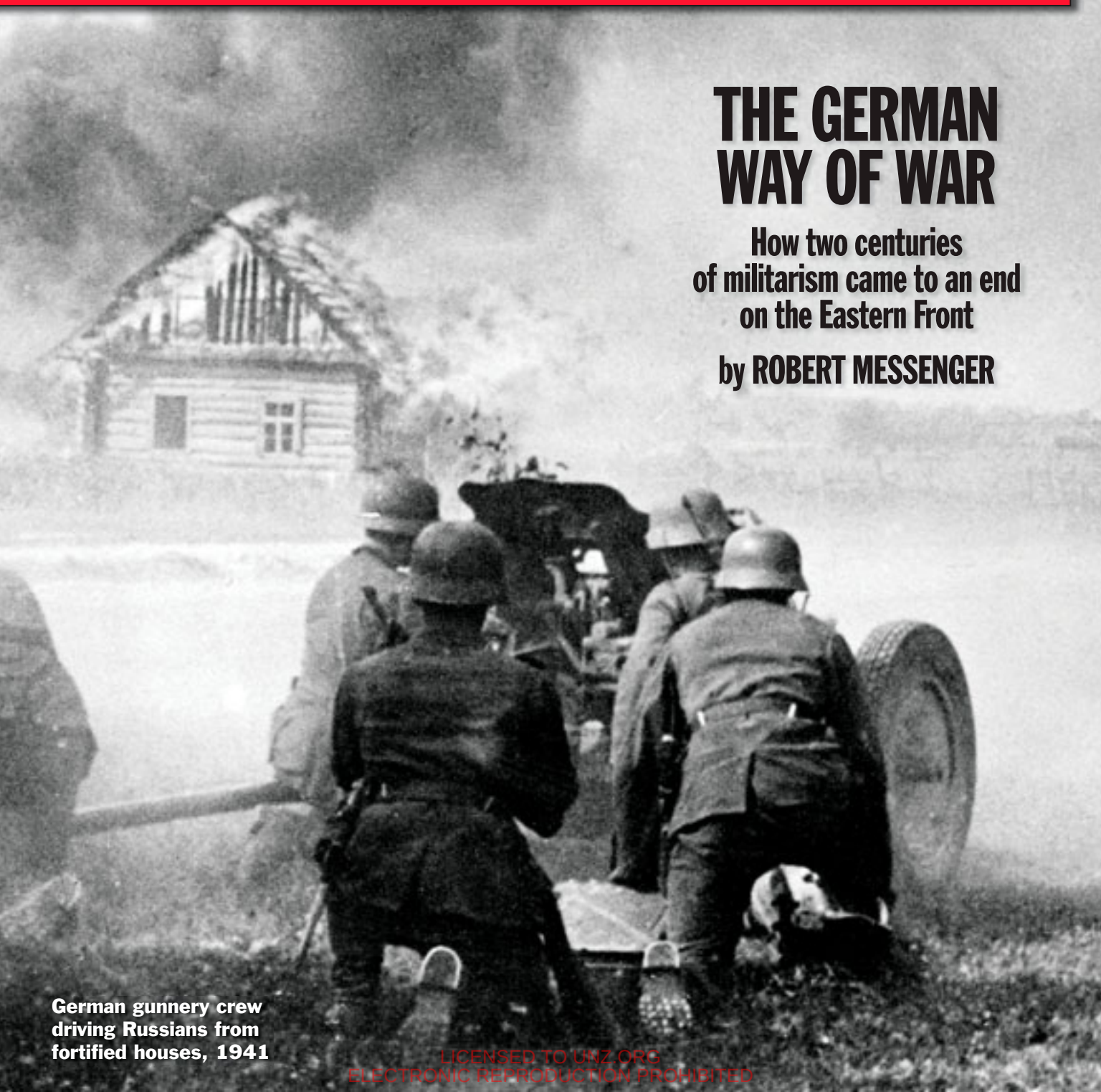
INCONVENIENT TRUTHS OF THE 2008 CAMPAIGN
WILLIAM J. STUNTZ

THE GERMAN WAY OF WAR

How two centuries of militarism came to an end on the Eastern Front

by ROBERT MESSENGER



German gunnery crew driving Russians from fortified houses, 1941

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Our Fractured Supreme Court

The benefit of unanimity and the vanity of dissent

Shortly after taking office, Chief Justice John Roberts embarked on a campaign within the Court and, unusually, in the press, to revive the tradition of unanimity in Supreme Court decisions. He has spoken of his concern that the Supreme Court is losing its legitimacy in the public's mind because of the frequency of dissenting opinions, arguing that this diminishes the respect and acceptance its decisions receive, and that the Court 's public standing is enhanced if its decisions are unanimous, or nearly so. . . . The justices' work product increasingly consists more of composing dissents and concurrences than of writing opinions for the Court: until 1941, 80 to 90 percent of all opinions were opinions for the Court; now the number is less than 50 percent . . . — with separate opinions proliferating like mushrooms after a summer rain. At the extreme, this proliferation of opinions makes a joke of the Court's core function "to say what the law is," in Chief Justice Marshall's phrase

—Michael Schwartz

The Optimistic Thought Experiment

In the long run, there are no good bets against globalization

At various points, like a mirage in the desert, the goal of the [globalization] project has seemed almost within reach, only to fail or be postponed every time, at least thus far. For the past three centuries, the great rises and falls of the West track the high and low points of the hope for globalization. And whether by cause or effect or both, the abstract hopes of a global order also are mirrored in the virtual world of money and finance. The rises and falls of the globalizing West have been tracked by the peaks and valleys of the stock market. Almost every financial bubble has involved nothing more or less than a serious miscalculation about the true probability of successful globalization.

— Peter Thiel

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Maharishi, What Have You Done?

The hole one feels in the nation's collective soul this week may be due to the passing of the Giggling Guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, of undisclosed cause, though one suspects old age had something to do with it. He was anywhere from 91 to 98 years young. Nobody knows for sure. Age is an afterthought in the realm of space-time consciousness.

Far be it from us to make fun of the other guy's religion, at least now that Mitt Romney is out of the presidential race, but having introduced "yogic flying" to the world ("frog hopping" to cynics), the Maharishi is to thank for several decades of self-help quackery. He got the ball rolling with his Transcendental Meditation (TM) movement. His pioneering techniques included sitting with his eyes closed, chanting mantras, and encouraging legions of gullible celebrities to vacate their minds (many of them already had a head start) in a ritual that was said to "involve neither concentration nor contemplation." Kind of like watching *The View*.

Introduced to American audiences by the Beatles, he had a bumpy start when they accused the celibate ascetic of making inappropriate sexual advances while trying to achieve a state of oneness with Mia Farrow's sister (inspiring the Lennon-penned song, "Sexy Sadie"). That wasn't the only setback he suffered, either. Ringo had to leave the ashram early because he couldn't eat spicy food.

But the Maharishi did all right for himself in the decades that followed, as cult leaders tend to do. Sure, his TM theme park, Veda Land, proposed by the late magician Doug Henning, which was to feature a levitating restaurant, never got off the ground, so to speak. But he did manage to inspire a whole city, Maharishi Vedic City in Iowa, which comes complete with its own architecture, education system (developing the "total brain potential and cosmic creative intelligence of every student"), and "Vedic Defense" force—a Kucinich-like group of "peace-creating experts" whose TM and "Yogic Flying techniques will promote coherent national and world consciousness and thereby prevent any negativity from arising in America or in the family of nations."

It even has its own currency—the Raam. If you're all out of Raams, though, no worries. "You can still use dollars or your credit card," Vedic City's website instructs. Color THE SCRAPBOOK negative, but it's easy to stay positive when sheeple buy your five-day TM classes for $2,500 a pop, a drop in the bucket of your organization's $3.5 billion in assets.

As Gita Mehta wrote in her timeless book, *Karma Cola*: "The westerner is finding the dialectics of history less fascinating than the endless opportunities for narcissism provided by the Wisdom of the East. . . . Coming at the problem from separate directions, both parties have chanced upon the same conclusion, namely, that the most effective weapon against irony is to reduce everything to the banal. You have the Karma, we'll take the Coca-Cola, a metaphysical soft drink for a physical one." ♦

Irving Kristol on Sheryl Crow

What do Sheryl Crow and W.H. Auden have in common? We'll let Irving Kristol explain. He writes to THE SCRAPBOOK in reply to an item on this page last week describing Crow's paranoid fantasy that Karl Rove was somehow behind the media's ridicule of her memorable proposal for dealing with climate change.

Our distinguished correspondent chivalrously rides to the defense of the beleaguered folk singer: "Please assure Ms. Sheryl Crow that she need not be embarrassed by the revelation that, to help save the planet, she proposed restricting the use of toilet paper to one square per bathroom visit. It is an idea that has a distinguished precedent.

"Early in World War II, when food and gasoline and much else were being rationed, a small group of intellectuals in New York decided to live economically. They rented a house in Brooklyn with the intention of creating a mini-collective of five or six residents. The only names I remember were Benjamin Britten and W.H. Auden. Because he did his writing at home, Auden was elected general manager. It was he who came up with the brilliant suggestion of one square per bathroom visit.

"The group dissolved within months."

Maybe it was more than the unmentionable odour of death that offended Auden's September night. ♦

Our Celebrity Advisers

In other developments on the celebrity expertise front, Joss Stone, the English songstress, was in New York for Fashion Week, where she pitched in to help raise awareness of heart disease among women, at an event sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Her advice? We'll let a reporter

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of May 29, 2000)

at London's *Sun* tabloid explain:

> When asked how she protected her heart, genius Joss replied: "In England we smoke [hand] rolled cigarettes. It's better to smoke rollies than straights. Straights have chemicals that keep them burning. So if you have to really smoke, smoke rollies." Top advice—except it's *wrong*. A recent study revealed that hand-rolled ciggies lead to a higher incidence of lung cancer.

As the *Sun* notes: "It's like Pete Doherty recommending heroin at a hepatitis fundraiser." ♦

Pursuing That Elusive, Black-Turtlenecked Readership

Newsweek's Jon Meacham at the Columbia Journalism School, wearing his heart on his sleeve and a bit unaware of the improving security situation in Baghdad, replies to a J-school student who says to him, "The news? I don't get it from *Newsweek*. *The Economist* is more courageous" (as reported in the *New York Observer*):

> "The success of *The Economist*—the fact that you read it, a black-turtlenecked guy at Columbia," Mr. Meacham began. But then he changed tack.
>
> "Look, I need you," said Mr. Meacham. "And I need—I've got people out there risking their lives right now. *The Economist* is not, by the way . . ." He changed tack again. "I've got four people in Baghdad who could be killed at any moment who are trying to tell the truth the best they can of that story. . . .
>
> "It's an incredible frustration that I've got some of the most decent, hard-working, honest, passionate, straight-shooting, non-ideological people who just want to tell the damn truth, and how to get this past this image that we're just middlebrow. . . . I just don't know how to do it." ♦

Saint Barack (cont.)

"No question, he comes off as at once brilliant and sensible, vibrant and measured, engaged and engaging, talented, forthright, quick-witted, passionate, thoughtful and, as with all remarkable people whom experience has taught both the extent and the bitter limits of their gifts, reasonably humble." (Michael Chabon on Obama, February 4, 2008, *Washington Post*.) ♦

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Casual

Recovering Cheapskate

Growing up among the striving bourgeoisie (teachers, cops, tradesmen), I learned to be suspicious of anyone who was selling something. I remember being told that restaurants served you bread in order to make you thirsty for more drinks, on which their profit margin was high. This was very tricky of them. That I had often seen my own parents offer drinks and little bites of this or that, often involving bread, to dinner guests did not make it okay when the same rite was performed by people who expected payment. As a result I am dubious about the phrase "hospitality industry."

Making money was objectionable, except when *you* did it. Then it was the honest reward due to hard work.

I can remember my lovely mother waving off salespeople, always with a prompt, "No, we're just looking." Pulling into a gas station one summer day, she asked the attendant how much a gallon of unleaded was. The young guy said something like a dollar fifty. Mom shot him a stern look and said, "Outrageous. I'll drive on." This line became legendary in my family, a perfect soundbite for the frugality that enabled our mother to manage a household in which six children were fed, clothed, and schooled, all pretty decently, on a middle-class income.

At the time, this financial anxiety seemed to me dreadful, embarrassing, and sometimes hilarious. More than once my two brothers and I literally rolled on the kitchen floor laughing at the sight of the super-large bright-yellow no-frills box of dehydrated milk my mother regularly bought to avoid the expense of yet another half-gallon of milk.

Still, cheapness stuck to me as an adult. I was more comfortable in discount stores or getting takeout—anything to avoid high prices and the people whose job it was to talk you into overpaying. Until two years ago.

That's when I joined a club for the summer so I could use its showers in the mornings after riding my bicycle several miles to work. The club's staff didn't live up to my Wodehousean fantasy of how rich people live; I'd expected solemn old retainers bowing and scraping, before offering sage advice on what to wear, eat, or drink. The people who worked at the club were unfailingly polite, though, and the ones I saw regularly called me Mister Skinner. Oh, I got used to it very quickly.

DARREN GYGI

Too bad it had to end. The seasonal membership was steeply discounted because so many members were out of town during the summer, and I certainly couldn't afford the annual dues. But I can see in retrospect it was a turning point.

When I went shopping this Christmas for my wife Cynthia—always an occasion for personal reflection—I checked out a luxurious department store. There, amidst price tags my mother would have called outrageous, I noticed a number of young women shopping with an ostentatious, proprietary ease. One girl with beautiful long blonde hair—she couldn't have been old enough to provide the cashier a driver's license along with her daddy's credit card—turned to the saleswoman tailing her and held out her long winter coat, saying, "Could you take this and, I dunno, put it somewhere?"

I left empty-handed, but on my way home I stopped at a little dress shop in Old Town Alexandria that sold, I remembered Cynthia once hinting, really beautiful stuff. It was exactly the kind of shopping situation that used to give me hives: expensive things sold by an intense salesperson in a small store from which you couldn't escape without saying goodbye.

The owner, a petite, middle-aged Frenchwoman, told me about her shop and the designers she liked. She asked my wife's size. I mentioned that Cynthia is pregnant, so, after congratulating me and inquiring briefly about our other children, she gave me a personalized tour of every dress that fit my rough requirement of something that a pregnant wife could wear to a nice party or out to dinner. And then she showed me a number of items just because she wanted me to admire their beauty. It was an advanced class in what to buy for your wife, and charmingly taught.

I asked if many of her customers were male. Yes, she said, a small number of her regular customers were men like me who bought dresses for their wives or girlfriends—men with, you know, really fine taste.

Putty in her hands, I bought an expensive dress and left wondering why everyone who wanted my money wasn't so kind and interesting. I'm so glad my mother wasn't there.

David Skinner

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Good News for Conservatives

What a moment! Having learned nothing from the left's Bush Derangement Syndrome, the conservative movement's big talkers spent the days before Super Tuesday indulging in a fiery display of McCain Derangement Syndrome. For some of these folks, this is what medical insurance providers might call a preexisting condition, always on the verge of flaring up. Republican voters were more sensible. They went for McCain, selecting the most electable and impressive candidate. The conservative movement is licking its wounds, but will recover.

It was an unattractive few weeks. In the rush to damn McCain, the movement paid obeisance to some dubious advisers. It listened to the pronouncements of Tom DeLay, who had previously done so much to convince his countrymen that conservatives could not be trusted to govern. It hearkened to the political counsel of Rick Santorum, who lost his Senate seat in the swing state of Pennsylvania two years ago by 17 percentage points. It took seriously the aspersions of James Dobson, whose "conscience" does not permit him to vote for John McCain.

Well, movements are . . . *movements* after all. They tend to march to the beat of the loudest drums. Still, it does seem that many self-proclaimed movement leaders have managed the impressive feat of sounding at once hysterical *and* tedious. But odds are most will soon reconcile themselves to McCain. The fact is, ordinary American conservatives already are reconciled. Some are enthusiastic. And movement leaders are good at racing to the head of a parade when they see their "followers" marching by.

Here's the good news—and it's really quite good. A reasonably conservative presidential candidate, leading a reasonably conservative party, has a good chance to win the general election. With a difficult task ahead of it—holding on to the White House for a third term, and in this case for the sixth out of the last eight—the GOP has lucked into having as its nominee John McCain, one of the most popular politicians in America.

What's more, conservatism as a set of ideas is in pretty good shape. "Neoconservative" thinking on America's place in the world has beaten back attempts to revive the crabbed "realism" of some congressional Republicans in the 1990s as a plausible approach for dealing with the world of the 21st century. And there is a resurgence of creative thinking on domestic policy, reminiscent of the neoconservatism of an earlier generation. Younger conservatives are displaying a welcome heterodoxy in their approach to health care, taxes, and family policy issues. (To toot our own horn, and to mention just a few examples from these pages: See Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam, "The Party of Sam's Club," November 14, 2005; Yuval Levin, "Putting Parents First," December 4, 2006; James C. Capretta's "Gunnar Myrdal Was Right: Social Security's Fertility Problem," May 7, 2007; and "Conservative Populism: Rightly Understood," by Ramesh Ponnuru and Yuval Levin, January 28, 2008.)

Conservatives, in short, are adjusting to the times. This is a good thing, and is one of the neglected lessons of Ronald Reagan's success: Reagan's 1980 platform differed from Barry Goldwater's in 1964. Consider further that 2008 is as far removed from 1980, as 1960 was from 1932. Movement liberalism in 1960 yearned for a purer, more orthodox FDR-style liberal than John F. Kennedy. Eleanor Roosevelt was appalled that the old guard had to give way. But it was surely better for liberals and liberalism that JFK called for a New Frontier rather than an extension of the New Deal.

Defenders of conservative orthodoxy often speak of their movement as, so to speak, seated on a three-legged stool of social, economic, and foreign policy conservatism. Of course most conservatives don't think of themselves as belonging to just one of these categories. The metaphor implicitly accepts a kind of balkanization of conservatism that does an injustice to the richness of the conservative idea. Furthermore the "stool" image is static—and therefore a poor guide to thinking about real, ongoing democratic politics.

The good news is that real, existing American conservatives aren't so reactive. They seem to be possessed of a healthy love of our country and a sensibly cautious optimism about its future. The 9/11 generation shows great promise at doing better than its boomer elders in coming to grips with how to shape a viable conservative future in the modern world. The crotchets of the conservative movement notwithstanding, 2008 is a moment of conservative opportunity.

—*William Kristol*

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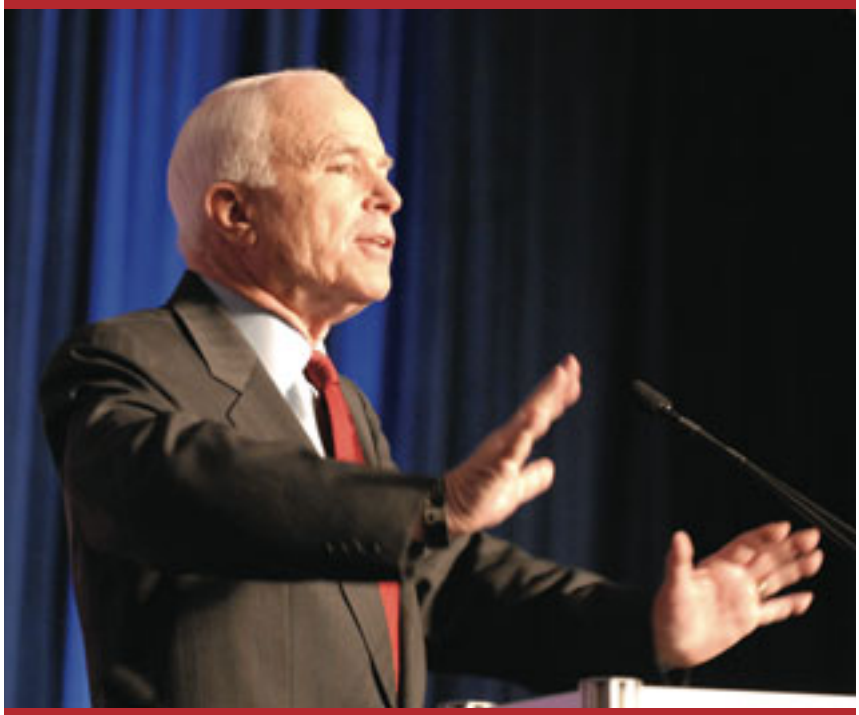

Can't We All Just Get Along?

John McCain courts the right.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Less than 12 hours after polls closed on Super Tuesday, the press corps covering John McCain gathered in a hangar at Swift Aviation in Phoenix, Arizona, for another press conference. The focus, as it had been for more than a week, was on one question: How will John McCain repair the breach with the conservatives who have been so vociferously critical of his candidacy?

Reporters were obsessed with it. The McCain campaign was not. For weeks, McCain advisers had spoken with confidence about the inevitable coalescing around their man once he became the presumptive nominee.

Stephen F. Hayes is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Senator Lindsey Graham arrived as reporters waited. Graham is McCain's closest friend in the Senate and a trusted adviser. He is very quotable and very willing to be quoted, so reporters flock to him. Informal chats become impromptu press conferences.

And so it was last Wednesday, a few minutes after 9 a.m As Graham started to answer questions, reporters pulled out their notebooks and turned on their audio recorders. Soon, television cameras and their bright lights were trained on Graham's face as he praised McCain for his leadership and made a case that McCain will be a strong nominee.

McCain, Graham said, will be able to present a "conservatism that is not a threat, that will be attractive to Reagan Democrats and independents." It was a telling description. Just as George W. Bush's "compassionate conservatism" bothered some conservatives—aren't most conservatives compassionate?—selling McCain as the nonthreatening conservative implies that other conservatives are threatening.

Moments later Joe Lieberman arrived. Some of the reporters hovering around Graham wandered over to Lieberman. The Connecticut senator, a former Democrat, said the key to a McCain victory would be his bipartisan appeal. "The important thing to win this election is to win the majority of independents and some Democrats. Senator McCain is a devoted Republican, but has always worked across party lines."

McCain walked up next, looking relaxed. He was wearing a navy sport coat, gray dress slacks, and a blue shirt without a tie. As always, McCain patiently tried to take a question from any reporter who wanted to ask one. He struck some conservative notes. He boasted of his "fundamental conservative philosophy" and said raising taxes would be "the worst thing we could do to our economy."

But many of his answers sounded the same bipartisan theme that had emerged from the exchanges with Graham and Lieberman. I used my question to press him on one possible source of the mistrust between McCain and movement conservatives: his demeanor.

McCain had just defended his record by citing his high ratings from the conservative groups Citizens Against Government Waste and Citizens for a Sound Economy. I suggested we stipulate that his record is more conservative than some of his critics have claimed. Then I asked McCain about the perception that he enjoys sticking his fingers in the eyes of conservatives when he disagrees with them—while he takes pleasure in working with Democrats. McCain didn't address the first claim and defended himself against the second.

"The most compelling moment in all this campaign in many respects—not all, many—was standing on the

LEV NISNEVITCH / THE WEEKLY STANDARD

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stage with Joe Lieberman," he said. McCain highlighted his willingness to work with Democrats and touted his ability to work "across the aisle" as a strength. Conservatives, he said, appreciate it, too. "One thing I'm convinced of, without a doubt, is that conservatives are glad when Joe Lieberman and I worked together in establishing the 9/11 Commission and then moved and got many of their recommendations into law."

Setting aside that specific claim (I'm not convinced he is right), McCain's answer was interesting because it seemed to affirm the premise of the question. And one major difference between McCain and other conservatives is that he sees bipartisanship as both a means to an end and an end in itself. Most conservatives do not.

There were other differences, too, and they would be heavily scrutinized the following day, in what would be McCain's biggest speech of the campaign so far.

As former senator George Allen spoke from the podium at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Washington last Thursday, offering his surprise endorsement of McCain's presidential bid shortly before the Arizona senator took the stage, a McCain advance staffer in a sharp navy blue suit quietly approached the CPAC dignitaries sitting in the first two rows of chairs in the cavernous ballroom. "I'm going to need you all to move," the McCain aide said. "Those seats are reserved for the congressmen and senators supporting Senator McCain."

No one budged.

At their feet was the detritus of an eventful morning—an empty Starbucks cup, a copy of the *Washington Times*, a brochure for the conservative website Townhall.com, and a discarded pair of fully inflated red "Mitt Romney" thunderstix.

To the surprise and disappointment of many in the crowd, Romney had used his speech earlier in the day to drop out of the race for the Republican nomination. Even as he did so, his supporters urged him to continue, with shouts of "Fight on!" ringing out while Romney spoke. Before Romney, Vice President Dick Cheney had spoken, to even more enthusiastic applause. Cheney had received a long standing ovation when he was introduced and again as he defended the Bush administration's most controversial policies. "And would I support those same decisions today? You're damn right I would," he said. "The absence of another 9/11 is not an accident," Cheney added. "It is an achievement."

The difficult task for the afternoon speaker, then, would be to move a largely Dick Cheney crowd to support a John McCain Republican. And the equally difficult immediate task for the McCain aide was to move the CPAC VIPs—wearing "Diamond" and "Co-Sponsor" badges that indicated their relative importance—from their seats at the front of the room.

"I'm serious. Y'all have to move, now."

Nothing.

"They're for members of Congress."

Still quiet. Then someone shouted, "We paid for these seats!"

McCain's aide, realizing his predicament, huddled with a CPAC organizer. They fetched a dozen chairs from the kitchen and the holding room just to the left of the stage and began to create a new section for the McCain campaign VIPs, alongside the conservative activists who had been there all day.

Among the conservatives who took their places in the new McCain section were elected officials who would have been comfortable—more comfortable than McCain himself—in the CPAC crowd: former Solicitor General Ted Olson; Arizona senator Jon Kyl; former Oklahoma governor Frank Keating; Mississippi representative Chip Pickering; and Kansas senator Sam Brownback. Also with McCain, sitting nearby, was California representative Dan Lungren. After George Allen endorsed McCain, Tom Coburn, perhaps the most conservative member of the Senate, introduced him.

It's possible to make too much of the seating squabble. Still, it was revealing. There is little doubt the CPACers would have moved for, say, Dick Cheney's intimates—not to mention, in an earlier day, Ronald Reagan's.

Coburn acknowledged that he and other conservatives have fought with McCain on judges, immigration, and campaign finance reform. But, said Coburn, "the concerns I hear about John McCain pale in comparison to the two greatest challenges facing our country: terrorism and a Congress that refuses to correct our unsustainable fiscal course."

When McCain spoke, he emphasized those points. He framed the race as an argument "about hugely consequential things," with significant differences between his views and those of the remaining Democrats, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. "Senator Clinton and Senator Obama want to increase the size of the federal government. I intend to reduce it," he said. And later: "Senator Clinton and Senator Obama will raise your taxes. I intend to cut them."

He was particularly forceful on Iraq and the broader war.

> Senator Clinton and Senator Obama will withdraw our forces from Iraq based on an arbitrary timetable designed for the sake of political expediency, and which recklessly ignores the profound human calamity and dire threats to our security that would ensue. I intend to win the war. . . . I know that the costs in lives and treasure we would incur should we fail in Iraq will be far greater than the heartbreaking losses we have suffered to date. And I will not allow that to happen.
>
> They won't recognize and seriously address the threat posed by an Iran with nuclear ambitions to our ally, Israel, and the region. I intend to make unmistakably clear to Iran we will not permit a government that espouses the destruction of the State of Israel as its fondest wish and pledges undying enmity to the United States to possess the weapons to advance their malevolent ambitions. . . .
>
> These are but a few of the differences that will define this election. They are very significant differences, and I promise you, I intend to contest these issues on conservative grounds and fight as hard as I can to defend the

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principles and positions we share, and to keep this country safe, proud, prosperous, and free.

McCain's top adviser, Mark Salter, the coauthor of several McCain books, had stayed in Phoenix an extra day to blend the many drafts of this speech into a cohesive and sometimes powerful text. McCain's team had been working on it for more than ten days, beginning even before McCain had formally accepted the invitation to address CPAC. Just hours before the speech was to be delivered, the McCain team learned from the cable news networks that Mitt Romney would be dropping out. They made appropriate last minute tweaks, including the softening of some language that could have been seen as criticism of Romney. (In his stump speeches, McCain used to point out that he opposed a $20 billion "bailout" of the auto industry in Michigan, something Romney favored. At CPAC, McCain spoke vaguely of favoring market-based solutions.)

The result was a rousing, well-crafted call for conservatives to join his campaign. And if not all of the CPAC VIPs in the front of the room were ready to volunteer for McCain, they slowly warmed to him over the course of the address. Two women in the third row who had refused to clap when McCain was introduced applauded reluctantly when he criticized Senate Democrats for blocking legislation to extend FISA reform.

Former House majority leader Tom DeLay stood to the side of the stage for most the speech with his arms crossed and a scowl on his face. But even DeLay managed a few half-hearted claps when McCain promised to appoint conservative judges.

After the speech, DeLay criticized McCain. "The problem that conservatives have with him is his record," DeLay said, adding that one speech cannot obscure that bigger issue. But when I asked him if he had ruled out a vote for McCain, DeLay said rather emphatically that he had not. Coming from one who previously said McCain had "done more to hurt the Republican party than any elected official I know of," that's progress. ♦

What Obama Means By Unity

A liberal majority.

BY JONATHAN V. LAST

Sometime before Barack Obama's strong showing on Super Tuesday, the *Washington Post* observed that the senator had been campaigning across this great land on a "platform of hope and change." Whether or not the *Post* was being arch, they had it about right.

Obama rarely speaks about policy specifics; "hope" and "change" are the two dominant messages he preaches on the stump. But he has two secondary themes: "straight talk" and "unity." They don't receive nearly as much attention: Perhaps because an examination of them shows Obama to be a somewhat conventional political figure.

During the course of his standard stump speech, Obama promises to deliver "a politics that [isn't] grounded in ideology, but in practicality. Not in spin and PR, but in straight talk." He promises to tell voters not what they want to hear, but the hard truths that they need to hear. And he portrays himself as the great uniter of the Republic. As the voiceover in one of his ads explains, "Only Barack Obama can bring a fractured people together. . . . He embodies the hope of our nation."

But on both of these themes, Obama's behavior is very different from his rhetoric.

Start with the straight talk. During his South Carolina victory speech, the crowd kept chanting that "race doesn't matter." It was a comforting thought in the wake of an election where more than 80 percent of African Americans voted for the African-American candidate. And Obama fed that sentiment, saying, "The assumption that African Americans cannot support the white candidate . . . we are here tonight to say that that is not the America that we believe in. I did not travel around this state . . . to see a white South Carolina, and a black South Carolina. I saw *South Carolina*."

But the uncomfortable truth is that race mattered very much for Obama in the early going. Not only did African Americans vote in overwhelming numbers for Obama in what looked, at least on the surface, like racial solidarity. But, as Real Clear Politics's Jay Cost discovered, a regression analysis of the voting in Nevada and South Carolina showed almost a straight-line correlation between the racial make-up of an area and the percentage of white votes Obama received: The more uniformly white an area was, the better Obama did among white voters; as the area became more racially mixed, Obama's percentage of the white vote dropped.

This phenomenon could mean any number of things and ultimately may be unimportant to the outcome of the election. But it does show that race matters to many Obama voters.

Then there's his stance on immigration. Obama is for comprehensive immigration reform. He says he wants to begin such reform by securing the border with Mexico, which he justifies by saying that we need to know who is coming into America. At the Los Angeles debate, for instance, he said "there is no doubt that we have to get control of our borders. We can't have hundreds of

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JASON SIELER

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thousands of people coming over to the United States without us having any idea who they are."

Yet he dismisses the impact illegal immigrants have on low-wage workers. When asked about this, he said: "I think to suggest somehow that the problem that we're seeing in inner-city unemployment, for example, is attributable to immigrants, I think, is a case of scapegoating that I do not believe in, I do not subscribe to." Immigration reform may or may not be a good idea on balance, but to refuse to recognize the pressures illegal immigration puts on low-end wages is to shy away from a very hard truth.

On the question of "unity," Obama's behavior is even more uneven. During one campaign stop in New Hampshire, Obama was heckled by anti-abortion protestors. When his decidedly pro-abortion crowd began to jeer them, Obama defended the protestors, saying that their demonstration was honorable and within the great American political tradition. It was a striking moment of Obama acting as a unifying presence.

Yet a few weeks later, on the anniversary of *Roe* v. *Wade*, Obama released a statement that was decidedly less unifying. He called abortion a "fundamental right" and boasted that he has always been a strong supporter of "reproductive justice." He said that *Roe* "is about more than a woman's right to choose; it's about equality." Nothing in his full-throated defense of abortion-on-demand went so far as to hope that abortion could be safe, legal, and rare.

The more closely you listen to Obama, the more obvious it becomes that while he's very much for civility, his commitment to unity is suspect. He frequently says that after he's elected president, Americans will be able to "take our country back." He also talks about bringing together the people who have "lost faith in this country."

There is a real divide between those who think that America is doing okay, and can do better, and those who think that America has been hijacked and must be taken back from some nebulous other. But Obama has no interest in bridging this chasm. When he talks about unity, Obama means uniting the people who agree with him. He wants to unite 51 percent of America. And if you follow him around enough, very occasionally he lets that notion slip.

One night in New Hampshire, Obama embarked on a long discourse that hinted at what his idea of unity entails:

> [I]n my own life, I've discovered that if you really know what you stand for, if you know what you believe in, if you know who you are fighting for, if you know what you care about and cannot be compromised—then you can afford to reach out across the aisle. You can talk to people who don't agree with you. And you do so not just because you think that you're always going to persuade them, but because people out in America, outside of Washington, are listening.
>
> And they want to see that we can—that we don't have to agree on everything to work on something. That we can disagree without being disagreeable. That's how we can attract independents [to the] change agenda. That's how we can attract some Republicans. That's how we build a working majority for change. . . . And you can afford to be courteous. And you can say, "Yes, sir." And "No, sir." "Yes, ma'am." "No, ma'am." But if you're going to be in the way of change, get out of the way—we're pushing you aside. Very politely of course. That's how we win elections.

Obama's definition of unity sounds a lot like power politics. But at least he wants to practice it politely. For a Democratic party that has been dominated lately by anger and rancor, that's a change worth hoping for. ♦

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The Inconvenient Truths of 2008

Four things the party loyalists won't want to hear.

BY WILLIAM J. STUNTZ

Each party's base has two inconvenient truths it doesn't want to hear. For Republicans, those truths concern immigration and the culture war. Most of today's illegal immigrant population is here to stay (along with their descendants) and will pay no significant price for getting here outside the legal channels. No presidential candidate can change those facts. On the issue that matters most to conservative Christians—abortion—the political phase of the culture war is over. The right lost —a pro-life initiative failed in South Dakota in 2006: If it can't win there, it can't win anywhere. Well, maybe Utah.

For Democrats, the relevant subjects are Iraq and federal spending. Discussions of the Iraq war in Democratic primaries have a bizarre quality: Both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama speak as though the war is a lost cause. It isn't—unless one of them wins the election and pulls the plug, a scenario that Iran's proxies no doubt await eagerly. As for spending, the federal budget (and federal tax revenues) will leave no room for large, expensive, New Deal-style health and education programs. For the foreseeable future, domestic policymaking will have more to do with arranging incentives than with dispensing largesse: Think welfare reform, not Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

If Republicans fail to understand their unpleasant truths, they will lose in November, and lose badly. Democrats might win even if their heads remain in the sand: It's a Democratic year, as a comparison between the two parties' fundraising, turnout, and vote totals in the primaries to date suggests. But they will lose the chance to have the kind of public debate that shapes government policy—meaning, the kind that is based on truth, convenient and otherwise.

Consider the four issues in turn. The Republican base wants the country to reacquire control over its southern border, and wants to see the millions of illegal immigrants already here expelled or punished—because anything less rewards them for their violations. The first goal is both good policy and good politics. The second is a practical impossibility and a political disaster. No American government can afford to track down and expel, fine, or otherwise penalize 12 million of its residents: *17 times* the number of convicted felons who enter prison each year (and today's imprisonment rate has shattered historical records). That much law enforcement is beyond government's capacity—a fact for which conservatives, of all people, should be thankful.

Not only will the illegals themselves remain, so will generations of their offspring: a large voting bloc that will be forever barred to the party that wanted to ship their parents and grandparents back to their Central American homes. If the penalties for illegally crossing the border are more than a pittance, immigrants will simply refuse to pay them and remain underground, and no future government will spend the money needed to catch and prosecute them. Given those circumstances, amnesty is less a policy choice than a statement to political reality: the rough equivalent of bankruptcy for a debtor who, without it, will never pay another creditor another dime. To put the point differently, the size of America's Latino population means that the nation's border control problem must be solved with that population's consent. As Donald Rumsfeld might put it, you do immigration reform with the immigrants you have.

If the crusade to enforce our current immigration laws against our current immigrant population was lost several million border crossings ago, the crusade to end abortion and reform the culture by means of electoral politics was lost several election cycles ago. In 1989, William Rehnquist's Supreme Court issued its decision in *Webster* v. *Reproductive Health Services*, hinting that *Roe* v. *Wade*'s reversal was just around the corner. That fall, Virginians chose the nation's first elected black governor—not in spite of the fact that he was pro-choice, but because of it. Political insiders have long understood what many pro-life voters are loath to admit: In any national election in which abortion rights were squarely at issue, the pro-choice side would win, and win big.

It may be just as well: Even if culture warriors' political agenda were achievable, that agenda might prove counterproductive. Cultures are powerful and mysterious things; the idea that laws and politicians can direct their paths is, to say the least, lacking in empirical support. In the years immediately before *Roe*, abortion was a crime, and the number of abortions soared. Since that decision, abortion has been a constitutional right—yet, since 1980, the abortion rate has fallen by more than one third. The lesson is one conservatives should find easy to understand: Like modern economies, modern cultures resist centralized control. If pro-life evangelicals—of whom I'm one—wish to persuade our fellow citizens to protect unborn life, we must *persuade* them, not prosecute the ones who disagree.

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Republicans may be slow to accept defeat, but Democrats seem to have trouble accepting victory. It is no longer possible to say with a straight face that the war in Iraq is as good as lost, or that the "surge" is a flop. David Petraeus has proved to be a 21st-century Matthew Ridgway: the general who took over American forces in Korea after the Chinese had taken Seoul and swept down the peninsula. Ridgway retook Seoul, pushed Chinese and North Korean forces back to the 38th parallel, and salvaged a partial victory from what had looked like certain defeat. Petraeus has done as much, in more difficult circumstances. Yet Obama and Clinton compete to see who condemned the war soonest and who can promise to withdraw American soldiers the fastest.

They're missing the point. The war can and should be won even if it shouldn't have been fought in the first place—because we're not *in* the first place; choices must be made from where one stands today, not some imaginary place of the speaker's choosing. And the promise of speedy withdrawal tells those who fight American soldiers: Hold on a little longer; those you fight will soon leave the field. A more destructive message can scarcely be imagined.

The message on spending is simpler: Whatever programs the Democratic primary electorate may want, the money to pay for them will be there. It isn't so. Thanks to the Bush administration's budgetary surge—and, even more, thanks to the still-unsolved entitlements problem—the next president will have less budgetary room for maneuver than the current one had when he entered office.

In terms of fiscal policy, the last eight years have been a replay of the 1980s, when deficits soared but the Reagan administration paid no political price for them. The Reagan years were followed by the deficit-hawkish 1990s, when voters rewarded budget-balancing more than either tax-cutting or profligate spending. Today's candidates should take note. Senators Clinton and Obama may understand the fiscal constraints under which the next administration will operate—but if their debates about health care and education are any indication, they aren't telling Democratic voters.

A common thread runs through these four issues. Shooting wars and culture wars, immigration and the federal budget—all are examples of the Mick Jagger principle of governance: You can't always get what you want. Politicians have a limited array of governance tools available to them, and they operate in a world of constrained choices. Voters no doubt wish that the consequences of past policy errors—the Iraq invasion for Democrats, the failure to police the nation's borders for Republicans—could be wiped away. They can't. One part of the electorate believes that providing the best health care to all Americans is a moral imperative. Another part believes that the hundreds of thousands of abortions each year in the United States amount to a holocaust. No matter how passionately held, the first belief cannot make top-flight, universal, affordable health care a reality. Nor can pro-lifers' commitment, by itself, eliminate abortion. Wishing doesn't make it so.

Shooting wars and culture wars, immigration and the federal budget—all are examples of the Mick Jagger principle of governance: You can't always get what you want. Politicians have a limited array of governance tools available to them, and they operate in a world of constrained choices.

A sizable share of both parties' most passionate supporters seem not to understand that basic truth. "Yes, we can!"—so goes the shout that punctuates most Obama rallies. The audience may not realize it, but the spirit of those words is uncomfortably close to the spirit that led the current administration to fight a hard war with too few weapons and too few soldiers. Sometimes, leaders need to say: No, you can't. Problems aren't solved because voters, or the politicians they support, imagine the solutions.

Because these are Democratic-leaning times, Republicans have the most to gain from embracing this year's inconvenient truths—and may have a nearly ideal candidate to do the embracing. John McCain may be better positioned than anyone in either party to secure the southern border without alienating America's Latino population. He has a strong pro-life voting record, but has never been in the thick of the culture wars. On Iraq, McCain is prominently identified with Petraeus and the surge. Politically, he stands in much the same position today as Dwight Eisenhower in 1952: tough-minded and hard-nosed without being reckless—and, like Eisenhower with Korea, he bears none of the blame for the war's mishandling. On spending, McCain may be the country's leading proponent of fiscal discipline: Ross Perot without the lunacy. A McCain-led Republican party could become the party of deficit hawks—just when deficits are about to become the political liability they were in the 1990s.

The two Democrats seem less impressive on this score. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama talk about border control the way children talk about eating their vegetables. As kids leave the table before the beans and carrots are gone, one suspects a Democratic administration might quit on border security before the borders are secured. Neither sounds much like a deficit hawk. And on the war—the real one—both have made statements that could make wise governance impossible if either reaches power. Political talk matters: It shapes voters' expectations and defines the political context in which decisions are made. Standing tough in Iraq may be impossible after voters have heard, again and again, that their

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new president is firmly committed to bailing out, as quickly as possible.

Sad to say, the candidate who most often tells unhappy truths may not turn out to be the candidate who wins the most votes. Elections are not always won by truth-tellers; deception sometimes carries the day. John F. Kennedy, whose presidency is often invoked these days, won a close national election by describing an imaginary gap between the Soviet Union's arsenal of missiles and our own. If something similar happens this year, if the next president wins by promising limitless spending with limited taxes or a costless retreat in Iraq, voters should not blame the winning candidate. In politics as in markets, customers rule; we usually get the leaders we want. The trick is to want the right leaders. We might start by asking who tells us the truth—even, or especially, when it hurts. ♦

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Republicans Root for Obama

But don't count Hillary out.

BY FRED BARNES

Republicans and Barack Obama are far apart ideologically, but they have a common enemy: Hillary Clinton. This explains why many Republicans look kindly on Obama's bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. Republicans have two goals in the 2008 race. One is to retain the presidency. The other is to deny the Clintons—Hillary and Bill—another four (or eight) years in the White House.

Thwarting the Clintons won't be easy. Hillary Clinton is nowhere near as close to losing the Democratic nomination as many in the political community believe. It's true she doesn't inspire. In debates, she constantly flashes a fake smile and, when unnerved, unleashes a contrived laugh—aka, the cackle. She attracts far smaller and considerably less enthusiastic crowds than Obama does. And his fundraising now dwarfs hers.

But Clinton has already survived two crushing defeats, first in Iowa, then in South Carolina, only to rise again on Super Tuesday with a string of lopsided victories in blue states the Democratic nominee must carry in November. Obama did better in red states that are less important to Democrats in a general election.

For all her unattractiveness as a candidate, Clinton has put together an impressive, and seemingly durable, coalition of women, seniors, Hispanics, and the less-than-wealthy. In the California primary last week, she lost the white vote to Obama by 49 percent to 43 percent, yet won the state in a near-landslide: 52 percent to 42 percent.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Mark Penn, Clinton's chief strategist, has been ridiculed for his rosy analysis of her campaign. But he's probably right in claiming that she'd "be en route to being the nominee" if Democrats had a winner-take-all system in their primaries, as Republicans do. "But the proportional delegate system keeps this contest going with two candidates who have significant support," Penn wrote in a memo.

That system is all but certain to prevent either candidate from capturing the nomination in the remaining primaries and caucuses. Leaving aside the 796 super-delegates—chiefly elected and party officials—Clinton or Obama would need to win roughly three-fourths of the delegates in these states to wrap up the nomination. With proportional distribution of delegates, that's practically impossible.

So the nomination, in all likelihood, will be left up to the super-delegates. About half of them have already endorsed a candidate. Of these, Clinton leads by 90 delegates—a not insubstantial number. (Obama needs to steal super-delegates who've endorsed her to win.)

Clinton's strategy: a strong finishing kick. The states with primaries and caucuses over the next few weeks favor Obama, which means he'll likely take a narrow lead in delegates.

But there are three big primaries at the end of the process—Ohio and Texas on March 4 and Pennsylvania on April 22. In all three, Clinton starts with an advantage. Governors Ted Strickland of Ohio and Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania are backing Clinton, and their statewide organizations are a significant asset. In Texas, Hispanics are a major part of the Democratic electorate.

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If Hillary wins all three states, it's hard to imagine the super-delegates denying her the nomination. And a primary hat trick is not inconceivable. Just winning two of three would probably make her the hotter candidate—assuming she leads Obama in popular votes over the entire campaign.

Obama is concentrating on Texas. But he has two liabilities there. While he's shown great skill in organizing strong turnouts in caucus states, he fared less well in primary states, where the turnout is much greater. And he's not well organized among Hispanic voters. She is.

For obvious reasons, Clinton prefers primaries. After she lost the Iowa caucuses to Obama, Bill Clinton complained that caucuses are less democratic than primaries. In fact, Hillary Clinton incorrectly claimed last week that her husband had never won a caucus state in 1992 on his way to the Democratic nomination.

"I am more interested in what happens when a large number of people get to vote," she told reporters. "They get to vote all day. They don't have to show up for a few hours [at a caucus], which means they can't if they're working. . . . I'll be just really honest with you. I think that the primary gives people a much better idea of what would happen in the general election."

That last claim is dubious. Winning a primary isn't a reliable indicator of a candidate's strength in a general election. In many states, independents are barred from voting in primaries. And every poll I've seen this year shows that Obama would attract far more independents in the general election against a Republican than Clinton would.

Indeed, there's a growing consensus among both Republican and Democratic strategists that Obama would be the stronger general election candidate. He may be more liberal than Clinton, but by almost every other yardstick he's a more appealing candidate.

Nevertheless, many Republicans are rooting for him to knock off Clinton. If that makes it more difficult to keep the White House, so be it. Being spared another President Clinton is reward enough. For now. ♦

High Noon for Conservatives

Will Sheriff McCain fight the Democrats alone?

BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

It was *High Noon* on television, and the camera kept cutting away to those narrow shots of wall clocks and grandfather clocks and cuckoo clocks and pocket watches: that annoying *clonk*, *clonk*, *clonk* as the seconds ticked by and the train barreled closer. You remember the film. Everybody in town knew that Gary Cooper was the right man to stand up to the bad guys coming in on the noon train. But the unctuous Henry Morgan and all the rest of the town's bankers and shopkeepers wouldn't stand with him, and Grace Kelly, the sweet religious girl who loved him and mistrusted him, was packing her bags to leave.

Well, that's pretty much the Republican party, isn't it? Nobody doubts John McCain on foreign policy and national security. Oh, there are plenty of people who dislike his positions, beginning with the core of the Democratic party, but even they know where the man stands. It's on the other issues of the old Reagan platform that Republicans remain uneasy with McCain. The fiscal and domestic-policy conservatives—that's Henry Morgan—never liked him, and the social conservatives—that's Grace Kelly—kept hoping there was some other way to live.

Now John McCain is the presumptive Republican nominee, and he needs to find a way to win over the skittish conservatives. For that matter, the conservatives need to find a way to win over the nominee. What kind of president would we have with a John McCain bitterly convinced that he has won despite, or even against, the conservative movement?

Of course, that isn't likely. No meaningful number of conservatives will actually show up on Election Day to vote for Clinton or Obama in protest against McCain. But this much of Karl Rove's electoral vision remains true: If conservatives, especially social conservatives, stay home in November, the Democrats will almost certainly win. McCain has to *excite* conservatives about the election, both negatively, by convincing them that the Democrats must be defeated, and positively, by convincing them that he's a strong alternative.

No meaningful number of conservatives will actually show up on Election Day to vote for Clinton or Obama in protest. But this much of Karl Rove's electoral vision remains true: If social conservatives stay home in November, the Democrats will almost certainly win.

On Thursday, at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Washington, McCain began the work he has to do. His speech was, to some extent, a straightforward list of his conservative credentials as a Reagan Republican. "I believe today, as I believed 25 years ago," he insisted, "in small government; fiscal discipline; low taxes; a strong defense; judges who enforce, not make, our laws; the social values that are the true source of our strength; and, generally, the steadfast

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defense of our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, which I have defended my entire career as God-given to the born and unborn."

All that's more or less true, his critics can reply, but there's a lot of wiggle room within it. A judge could "enforce, and not make, our laws" by upholding the campaign-speech restrictions of the McCain-Feingold reform. "The social values that are the true source of our strength" need not necessarily be threatened by immigration amnesty. Small government seems an unlikely talking point for McCain; he's always been, like President Bush, a believer in government solutions. Fiscal discipline and low taxes can be held to even while he sponsors global-warming legislation, and his support for the rights of the unborn can be fudged to include his willingness to allow in-vitro embryos to be harvested for stem cells.

Of all these conservative complaints, McCain addressed only immigration directly—not exactly apologizing but making a conciliatory gesture: "While I and other Republican supporters of the bill were genuine in our intention to restore control of our borders, we failed, for various and understandable reasons, to convince Americans that we were. I accept that, and have pledged that it would be among my highest priorities to secure our borders first."

Early Friday morning, President Bush visited CPAC, speaking to the same crowd that had heard McCain the previous afternoon. Along the way, Bush trumpeted his stem cell victory: "In 2001, I had a grave decision to make on the question of embryonic stem cell research. I believed we could empower scientists and researchers to discover cures for terrible diseases—without crossing a moral line. . . . Then last November, scientists announced a landmark achievement. They found a way to reprogram adult skin cells to act like embryonic stem cells. This discovery has the potential to end the divisive debate over stem cell research. And it will allow us to expand the frontiers of medicine, while maintaining a culture of life."

It was a nice, valedictory moment, recalling the president's victory in the face of enormous opposition—a small portion of which came from John McCain. And yet, precisely because the recent scientific breakthroughs have granted Bush victory, social conservatives probably don't need a full mea culpa from McCain on the topic. Stem cells have disappeared as a major campaign concern, and though he was guilty of backsliding in 2004 (when he was one of 58 senators to sign a letter urging federal funding for new stem cell lines derived from frozen embryos), much of the specific issue has been eliminated by the new promise of reprogramming adult skin cells.

On campaign finance reform, however, something from McCain still feels necessary. There's a sense in which social conservatives need from a Republican, above all, certainty about the Supreme Court—and so, when President Bush forgot and nominated Harriet Miers, they quickly reminded him. McCain, however, is trapped by campaign finance reform. Where does he imagine he can find a justice who will both be a reliable conservative and uphold McCain-Feingold? One or the other has to go, and though McCain named John Roberts and Samuel Alito as model justices in his speech, it remains a question whether he thinks McCain-Feingold is worth the price of another nonconservative justice sitting on the Supreme Court.

Fiscal conservatives have heard from McCain many of their favorite keywords: earmarks, line-item veto, tax cuts, free-market solutions to health care, entitlement programs. It's hard to believe anyone was convinced that he is really averse to Bush-like big government, but then it's not clear he *has* to convince the fiscal conservatives of that; all he must do is persuade them that he's better than the Democrats.

Turns out, at the end of *High Noon*, Gary Cooper didn't actually need help from Henry Morgan and the other bankers and shopkeepers in the town. But without Grace Kelly, he would have died. If the social conservatives who love and mistrust him don't come back to help, John McCain will lose on November 4. ♦

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Mitt, We Hardly Knew Ye

Romney bows out.

BY DEAN BARNETT

One night in early 1994, I found myself in a Republican ward committee meeting in Newton, Massachusetts. It promised to be a relatively eventful evening. Beyond our usual festivities—chattering about lost school committee races and eating cupcakes and cookies—Senate candidate Mitt Romney was scheduled to pop in for a visit.

I had been volunteering for Romney for a month and had gotten to know him reasonably well. I had become an admirer, something that I remain to this day. I decided to do some spadework to prepare the room for Romney's arrival.

Not all present looked forward to Romney's visit. He was competing against a 1982 gubernatorial candidate for the Republican nomination and, then as now, wasn't conservative enough for everyone's tastes. His apparently limitless funds (which were much more limited 14 years ago) also irked some party regulars.

Even in a liberal enclave like Massachusetts, the kind of Republican party activists who bother to attend ward committee meetings are extremely conservative. Al Mandel, the gun-packing, 70-something conservative conscience of Newton's Republicans, recalled Romney's father. "He was another liberal one."

Romney came to our meeting and spent a couple of hours discussing everything that was on everyone's mind. He had an encyclopedic command of the issues. His intelligence was apparent. So too were his people skills and his ability to connect. By the end of the night, even Mandel was a little sold, whispering to me in an exaggerated Boston accent, "He's a *chahmah*." I went home that night thinking I had seen a candidate in action who would someday be president of the United States.

That "someday" will not be in 2009.

It often happens that a disconnect develops between the public's perception of a politician and the real man. Those who spend time with him, not all of them politically friendly, regularly testify that George W. Bush in person bears little resemblance to his *Saturday Night Live* incarnation. Yet with few politicians has the public perception diverged as dramatically from the real man as with Mitt Romney.

The blame for this must lie mainly with Romney and the Romney campaign. To those who know him, Romney is decent, intelligent, likable, and creative. He has the added benefit for a politician of having no skeletons in his closet. Former Massachusetts governor William F. Weld last week likened Romney to "prime sirloin"—presumably as opposed to run-of-the-mill political "horseflesh." And it's true that the Romney campaign had a top shelf product to sell. Yet too much of the voting public came to believe that Romney was more like Grandma's good-for-you but inedible chopped liver.

The great shame of the Romney campaign is that he was never able to fully convince the public that he sought the presidency not just out of ambition or even a belief in his own abilities, but because he wanted to take America in a very well-defined direction. It provides some consolation to supporters that by the time the end came, Romney's convictions had finally bubbled to the surface, and that a fair number of conservatives belatedly embraced the Romney campaign.

Popular opinion holds that Romney now has his sights set on 2012 or 2016. But it's far from a foregone conclusion that Romney will remain in public life. After losing to Ted Kennedy in 1994, having run a strong race that engendered much good will in the Commonwealth, he returned to his business and his family. That may happen again.

But I hope he hangs around the Republican party, and not just because of my own fondness for him. The perspective and experience of successful business executives is sorely lacking from the political debate, even on the Republican side. Romney now has the profile, not to mention the bankroll, to get his ideas before the public.

And if he decides to stay active in Republican and conservative politics, the YouTubes of performances from years gone by, which plagued him with a reputation for flip-flopping, will eventually recede into irrelevance. Conservatives and even the larger public will come to judge him by the value of his ideas and the forcefulness of his presentation. How many times he went hunting will cease to matter.

One of the reasons so many Republicans found this primary season dispiriting is that the candidates, Romney included, concentrated on "contrasting" themselves with one another. The most dismaying fact wasn't that the candidates attacked one another—politics ain't beanbag. But it made the party seem mired in the disputes of the 1980s and '90s, and bereft of fresh ideas.

What conservatism will come to stand for is more up for grabs now than at any point since 1980. There will be many consequential conversations to come. Let's hope Mitt Romney sticks around for the cupcakes and cookies, and joins the fun. ♦

Dean Barnett is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Not Every Leak Is Fit to Print

Why have federal prosecutors subpoenaed a New York Times *reporter?*

By Gabriel Schoenfeld

Investigations of national-security leaks in Washington are not all that rare. But until Judith Miller of the *New York Times* was sent to jail for 85 days by a special prosecutor digging into the Valerie Plame imbroglio, investigations of such leaks in which journalists are subpoenaed were about as common as unicorns wandering the National Mall.

We now have another such unicorn. On January 24, a federal grand jury in Alexandria issued a subpoena to James Risen of the *New York Times*, seeking information about who in the U.S. government provided him with classified information that he published in his book, *State of War*. That book appeared in January 2006, more than two years ago. The CIA may have a hard time keeping secrets, but the Justice Department, we are learning now that this long-running leak inquest has come to light, seems to be very good at it.

There are at least two possibilities why Risen was issued a subpoena. One is that his book badly embarrassed the CIA by exposing incompetence well beyond its familiar inability to keep secrets. In referring the breach to the Justice Department for investigation, the CIA is paying him back. The subpoena, in other words, is part and parcel of a cover-up of agency bungling.

James Risen

GETTY IMAGES

Gabriel Schoenfeld, senior editor of Commentary, *writes daily at connectingthedots.us.com.*

Another explanation is that, thanks to Risen's book, valuable intelligence sources and methods were compromised, damage was done to national security, and the Justice Department has been tasked with tracking down the malefactors in the intelligence community who broke their oaths of secrecy, violated the law, and dropped classified information of value to American adversaries into the public domain. Because Risen is the only one who knows their identity, he is being hauled before a grand jury.

Daniel Schorr of NPR is a proponent of the first theory. He sees a CIA "enraged" by the leak of its "colossal failure" and striking back. I would bet the agency's Farm that he is wrong. And that the second theory is closer to the mark.

According to Risen's lawyer, David N. Kelley—a former federal prosecutor now of Cahill Gordon & Reindel— the subpoena is focused on a chapter in Risen's book dealing with Iran. Part of it recounts an agency foul-up in 2004 with a system that made it possible "to send high-speed, encrypted messages directly and instantaneously from CIA headquarters to agents in the field who were equipped with small, covert personal communications devices." In short order, thanks to a botched transmission, the entire roster of American spies in Iran was rolled up. The CIA, according to Risen, was left "virtually blind in Iran, unable to provide any significant intelligence on one of the most critical issues facing the United States—whether Tehran was about to go nuclear."

The same chapter in *State of War* also extensively

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examines Operation Merlin, the codename for a CIA plan to funnel subtly flawed plans for the trigger of a nuclear device to Iran. The idea behind the scheme, according to Risen, was to induce the Iranians to rely on bad blueprints in building their bomb so that "instead of a mushroom cloud, the Iranian scientists would witness a disappointing fizzle." Along with the setback to their nuclear program, the Iranians would suffer humiliation before the world.

In *State of War*, Risen makes the Merlin plan seem harebrained. He notes, for one thing, that the émigré Russian scientist who was to deliver the Trojan Horse documents to the Iranians was able to spot the planted error at a glance. Risen points out that Iran possesses "a strong base of sophisticated scientists" who also would be "knowledgeable enough to spot flaws in nuclear blueprints," and that "[e]ven if the Iranians were interested in using the blueprints provided by the mysterious Russian, they would certainly examine and test the data in the documents before ever actually trying to build a bomb."

Risen also points to the dangers inherent in any intelligence program that passes nuclear information to an adversary, even if some of the information is designed to mislead. "If mishandled," he writes, such an initiative "could easily help an enemy accelerate its weapons development." In this instance, a CIA case officer, he reports, was convinced that exactly that might occur. The officer grew so concerned "that he went to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence to tell congressional investigators about the problems." But no action was taken.

The Natanz nuclear enrichment facility south of Tehran

GETTY IMAGES

In *State of War*, Risen provides an impressive array of details about Operation Merlin. But how do we know he has a full or accurate story? When writing about classified programs, investigative journalists attempt to assemble a picture from bits and pieces of information that are provided to them by confidential informants. Because intelligence information is tightly compartmentalized, these inside sources, unless they are at the top echelon, have only a partial grasp themselves of what the CIA is doing. They also always have an agenda of their own—to torpedo certain policies and/or advance their own careers. Journalists relying on such sources inevitably draw a picture that is skewed and incomplete. They not only lack all the pieces, they do not know what is true and what is false. Most important, they do not know what they do not know, including what kind of harm their reporting might inflict on the United States. In other words, they are groping in a dark room with a dagger in their hands.

Risen is expert at gaining the confidence of sources in the intelligence world and inducing them to tell him what they know. He is strikingly less adroit at making sense of what his sources tell him. At one juncture, Risen is at great pains to demonstrate that the Russian scientist used by the CIA as an intermediary wrote an unauthorized letter to the Iranians alerting them to the fact that the blueprints were deliberately flawed. After repeatedly hammering on this point, he reprints the text of the letter. It is in slightly broken English, but it says nothing of the sort.

At another juncture, Risen calls Merlin "one of the most reckless operations in the modern history of the CIA." Indeed, the chapter about Merlin is called "A Rogue Operation." But in what sense does Merlin qualify for an appellation that conjures up images of an unaccountable CIA launching missions on its own? The answer, supplied by Risen himself, is in no sense. After a long disquisition about how the CIA was "flying blind—dangerously so," he pirouettes to inform us that Operation Merlin was "first approved by President Bill Clinton" and subsequently "endorsed" by the Bush administration. In other words, far from carrying out a rogue operation, the CIA was proceeding under appropriate control.

Throughout the chapter, and indeed throughout the book, Risen reveals a trait that raises questions of another sort about *State of War*. The Merlin operation, he writes, had been conceived "in the darkest corner" of the American national-security establishment. The Russian émigré scientist in the employ of the CIA "stood out like a poor eastern cousin on Vienna's jeweled cityscape." As he approached his dropoff point, he experienced a "fevered

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rush of adrenaline." The fever "suddenly cooled when he realized the Iranian office was closed for the day." A depiction of the NSA as an "evil, rogue organization that used its cutting-edge technology to spy on and persecute unwitting Americans" had the effect of sending "shivers through [Michael] Hayden," who was running the agency at the time.

State of War is constructed almost entirely of breathless prose like this. In other words, in discussing the delicate game of intelligence, Risen writes on the level of the fictive Franklin W. Dixon, "author" of the Hardy Boys. His political analysis, in which "neoconservatives" in the Pentagon and White House are perpetually doing battle with State Department officials who are repeatedly "stunned" by the audacity of the "hardliners," is a perfect match to his tot-lot style.

The *New York Times*, which published some of the revelations in Risen's book—most notably his reporting about the NSA's Terrorist Surveillance Program—printed not a word about Operation Merlin. Why were they willing to allow their own reporter to scoop them on an important story? Were the editors of the *Times* worried about Risen's sourcing? Or were they troubled by something else? (The *Times*, always pressing relentlessly for openness in government, refuses to comment on its own internal deliberations.)

If that is suggestive, several other things also stand out in Risen's account of Operation Merlin that make the issuance of the federal subpoena more comprehensible. One of them is Merlin's highly sensitive nature. Risen himself notes that it was classified as SAP, a "special-access program," beyond top-secret. Knowledge of it was confined to "only a handful of CIA officers." Even the CIA station in Vienna, where the document transfer was to take place, was kept in the dark. Second, Risen states baldly that the National Security Agency was "eavesdropping on the telephone lines of the Iranian mission in Vienna," that it also "had broken the codes" of Iran's intelligence ministry, and that it was able to ascertain when the nuclear blueprints were picked up.

The significance of all this is hard to miss. Codebreaking and the interception of electronic transmissions are the crown jewels of American intelligence and guarded as such. Communications intelligence is one of three narrow categories of secrets—along with the identities of intelligence agents and the design of nuclear weapons—protected by a special statute all its own. *State of War* punctured this blanket of secrecy. And it did so in a way that undoubtedly caused the Iranians, along with other American adversaries, to improve their codes and protect their communications far more carefully. Thus, at a moment when U.S. intelligence was tasked with gaining information about Iranian nuclear weapons—one of our highest national priorities—out came revelations that closed a key American window into the workings of the Iranian government.

Codebreaking and the interception of electronic transmissions are the crown jewels of American intelligence and guarded as such. Puncturing this blanket of secrecy, Risen's *State of War* undoubtedly caused the Iranians and other American adversaries to improve codes and protect their communications far more carefully. Thus, at a moment when U.S. intelligence was tasked with gaining information about Iranian nuclear weapons, out came revelations that closed a key American window into the workings of the Iranian government.

Astonishingly, but not surprisingly, lobbyists for the media and advocates of "open government" are citing the subpoena handed to Risen as a reason for the Senate to pass a shield law exempting journalists from having to give evidence to grand juries and in courts. (The House passed such a bill last year.) "It absolutely shows the need for this legislation," says Lucy A. Dalglish, the executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.

But if anything, this case absolutely shows the perils of such legislation. Even without a shield law, reporters like James Risen are encouraging employees of the American people to renege on their oaths of secrecy, break the law, disclose information that severely undermines national security, and put all of us at risk. A shield law would be a license to do much more of the same.

James Risen is perfectly free to pursue a prize-winning journalistic career built upon promising confidentiality to sources within government. But there is an ancient and essential principle embodied in our democratically enacted laws: the public "has a right to every man's evidence" when our statutes are trampled upon. The rest of us are thus perfectly free to applaud that Risen is being compelled to testify about a crime that has been committed, a crime in this instance in which he is fully complicit. ♦

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A New Middle East, After All

What George W. Bush hath wrought

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

George W. Bush staked his presidency on his response to 9/11: on the proposition that the United States had to defeat the virulent forces loose in the Muslim world directly and militarily. In his last State of the Union address, delivered shortly after his first and only grand tour of the Middle East, Bush reaffirmed his intention to continue the fight everywhere he has committed American arms. It is way too soon to give the president a final grade, and it is surely tempting to flunk him, given the high-wire act the country has endured in Iraq. The denizens of the Middle East, however, will remember Bush as the most momentous American leader since an angry Thomas Jefferson sent men-of-war in pursuit of the Barbary pirates. His successor will not be able to walk away from what he has wrought. Let us consider the issues one by one—leaving aside for another day Iran and the menace of a Persian bomb.

IRAQ

The surge's success has put the administration more or less on autopilot: Neither Bush, nor his general, David Petraeus, nor a chastened Democratic Congress is going to abandon the surge through hasty troop reductions before Bush leaves office. Although the White House often seems bedeviled by the task of defining "victory" in Iraq, it really isn't that hard. Flawed and ugly as it is, Iraqi democracy stumbles forward. The Shiite and Sunni Arabs are slowly establishing representative political arrangements within their own communities that allow some diversity of opinion. With America's indispensable oversight, Iraq's Arabs and Kurds are gradually and painfully checking their worst passions and ambitions. As each community conquers its own demons, Iraqis develop the sentiments and patience to work across the sectarian divides.

Reuel Marc Gerecht is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard.

Given the totalitarian hell that was Saddam's Iraq, the violence that came with his fall, American negligence from 2003 to 2007, and the hostility of Tehran and the nearby Arab rulers to an American-midwifed democratic Iraq, this is an amazing achievement. The court intellectuals in Cairo, Riyadh, and Damascus usually treat the new Iraq with contempt and distortion, but they know that a democratic Iraq, even one born of the sin of American occupation, defies autocracy throughout the region.

Although the success of the counterinsurgency has opened up many avenues for political progress, the challenges remain large.

The still unscheduled referendum in which the people of Kirkuk and its environs are to vote on the status of that multiethnic city could possibly throw the north of the country into chaos. The Kurds will be tenacious about their "Jerusalem." Although they are somewhat disingenuous in their intentions, the Kurds want unchallenged control over Kirkuk's oil and would strongly prefer to have fewer Arabs living among them, especially Arabs who moved into Kurdish homes emptied by Saddam Hussein. Underestimating the passion of ethnically based nationalism has a bloody history, and Iraq's Kurds are a passionate, much-abused people. They will not allow Tamim province, which has Kirkuk's oil, to slip from their control to the central government's.

Yet odds are the Kurdish political elite, who have done very well since the invasion and are acutely aware of Turkish, Iranian, and Iraqi Arab sensitivities about Kurdish nationalism, will continue to be sufficiently measured in their drive for independence to keep all hell from breaking loose. Right now, Kirkuk is a back-burner issue in the increasingly vibrant Iraqi political discussions. (Sunni and Shiite Arabs and Kurds who would not have spoken to each other six months ago for fear of being murdered if caught in late-evening chats in "enemy" territory are now having civil exchanges all over Baghdad.) The Kurds know they could lose a referendum on Kirkuk at this time; Kurdish efforts to drive out and silence the potential "no" vote have not yet been sufficiently successful. Nonetheless, the Bush administration would be wise to have a rapid-reaction force

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ready to preempt Kurdish, Arab, and Turkmen animosities in the north.

Since the surge has now reached the city of Mosul, just south of Kurdistan, it's a good time for the administration to suggest to the Kurds that the United States takes a dim view of land grabs not effected legally under the Iraqi constitution. Any Kurdish ethnic cleansing should be countered forcefully. The Kurds have no desire to confront U.S. troops, so a clear threat of force should keep the peace. And as long as Kurdish acquisitiveness is kept in check, a powerful Sunni-Shiite Arab alliance against the Kurds is unlikely. One of the surge's successes is that it has allowed for Kurdish-Arab problems to be worked out peacefully. In the process, a functioning, decentralized Iraq has started to take shape.

When provincial elections are finally held across Iraq, possibly this year, the Sunnis, too, may start to claim a bigger stake in a more representative political system in provinces where they dominate, if not in the country at large. Much more than national legislation (such as that recently enacted allowing more former Baathists to receive their pensions and reenter the government work force), provincial elections should spur meaningful reconciliation. Elections will help the Sunni Arabs create new political groupings that reflect who they are more accurately than their present national parties. And elections should help them recapture a healthier national consciousness and identify a more legitimate post-Saddam national elite.

Elections may provoke some violence. Indeed, preparing for both the provincial elections and the national elections due in 2009 will likely check any American effort to draw down U.S. forces significantly before 2010. Yet internecine Sunni battles sparked by elections are likely to be limited. The Sunni Arabs have always known that they need to hang together to survive the greater demographic and geographic weight of the Shiites and Kurds. This instinct—which once

Flawed and ugly as it is, Iraqi democracy stumbles forward. The Shiite and Sunni Arabs are slowly establishing representative political arrangements within their own communities that allow some diversity of opinion.

Iraqi Shiite and Sunni Muslims at the reopening of a Sunni mosque in Sadr City, February 2007.

ALI ABBAS / EPA / CORBIS

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'Al Qaeda in Iraq has become a hand that destroys the Sunnis,' one Sunni insurgent spokesman told Al-Jazeera. 'Many Sunnis have been killed by them. Al Qaeda in Iraq is a source of corruption. . . . They always direct their weapons at innocent civilians.' Commentary like this influences Muslim attitudes far more than America's public-diplomacy outreach.

Abdul Sattar, a Sunni sheikh from Anbar Province who declared war on al Qaeda, arrives in Baghdad with escorts for a meeting with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and the ministers of defense and interior.

led the community to embrace al Qaeda and other extremists—will now, with the success of their own anti-al Qaeda "Awakening," likely keep intra-Sunni violence at bearable levels. Indeed, decisively losing the 2006-07 Battle of Baghdad has had a sobering effect on the community—witness the Sunni confessions, reported in both Western and Arab media, about how the insurgency, "misled" by al Qaeda, went too far in killing Shiites.

Perhaps the biggest danger for Iraq is that the success of the Awakening will breed a renewed Sunni hubris. The historic sense of Sunni entitlement, the Sunni Arabs' belief in their own martial and moral superiority over Shiites, was fuel for the insurgency. If the Sunnis' successful fight against al Qaeda also awakens a desire for round two with the Shia, then we will return quickly to where we were before General Petraeus took command. Provincial elections, and the campaigning around them, will indicate whether the Sunnis are now willing to let go of "their" Iraq.

Slowly and reluctantly, the Shiite-led government is incorporating the Sunni Awakening groups in Baghdad into the capital's police force. Now the government must also find a way to incorporate Anbar province's Awakening forces into a loose federal police structure, and the American Army must maintain payments to these new Sunni militias if the Shiite-led government refuses to do so. If the Shia see that these defense forces do not intend to challenge the government militarily—and this will take time—then a slow federalization of these disparate militias is possible. Patience, pressure, finesse, and a constant flow of American cash will be required to ensure the Awakening does not spook the Shiite community, which remains leery of former Baathists and al Qaeda supporters who have recently changed sides. The American embassy will have to work to persuade the government to absorb these units, tribe by tribe, town by town, into constabularies paid by Baghdad.

On the Shiite side, provincial elections carry risks. There has been considerable Shiite-on-Shiite violence, more than has been reported by the much diminished Western press in Baghdad. The Shia are likely to continue to fight among themselves, especially in the south, where there are no U.S. forces. These duels, which occur between Iraq's two largest Shiite forces—the Mahdi Army and the Badr Corps of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC, formerly SCIRI)—and a variety of local armed groups have always had the potential for catapulting the Shiite community into large-scale strife.

This violence has so far been contained, primarily for two reasons: U.S. forces are still all over the central Shiite provinces and can decisively take sides in Shiite battles if they choose to, and the clerical establishment led by Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani has used its influence to discourage violent factionalism. Lasting stability will likely come through big Shiite political parties that pay due respect to the clerical establishment. Although decentralization and federalism make sense for the Kurds and the Sunni Arabs, it's difficult to see how intra-Shiite federalism could play out happily. Basra's violence hasn't infected the Shiite north in part because the sentiments and allegiances of the city

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and the surrounding countryside really are distinctive. Trying to separate Baghdad, however, from the central Shiite regions, as some Shiite leaders recommend, seems a recipe for more violence, not less. Already, petty warlordism has emerged among the Shia, and it could spread if the Shiite leadership renounced a compelling national idea. In an oil-rentier state where oil wealth, at least outside Kurdistan, will first go to the central government, any attempt to formally subdivide the Shiites could turn into a nightmare.

Despite their often fiery national and Arab consciousness, the Iraqi Shia have no national institutions aside from their clerical establishment, which has always been weak in the south. And the south illustrates what can happen among them when national and foreign forces are insufficient to counter entropy. For the Shia, then, depending on the location, provincial elections may weaken national consciousness and fortify those elements—especially Iranian influence—that we want diminished.

Nevertheless, provincial elections also hold out considerable promise for Iraq's largest community. The big Shiite parties desperately need to be more attentive to local concerns; they need to think more about potholes, schools, and electricity and less about the elite, highly personal, "Green Zone" politics of Baghdad. In the all-important central regions of Iraq, which will determine the fate of the country, the clerics of Najaf appear to be still strong on the ground. Local elections may enhance the power of the peace-promoting traditional scholars of Islamic law.

Most important, a lot of Iraqis, especially Arabs, are mad about the unresponsiveness of the national government. They want to see more representative government. Many Shiites, especially among the southern tribes, want to see local government develop that isn't held hostage to the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, the Sadrists, or the Iranians. Without American forces in the south, it will be difficult to stop these three from intimidating voters. Yet at the very least, provincial elections will force competition among all the parties. They will advance the democratic dynamic and prepare the ground for the all-important national elections.

Provincial elections, even if deeply flawed, should help develop local urban elites, who, before the coming of the modern dictatorships, were the key to stability and basic decency in the Middle East. With American help, these elites might be willing and able to change Iraq's electoral system from one based on party lists to one based on districts in time for the national elections of 2009. Although party list systems have certain advantages in violent societies, district systems are conducive to stronger local leadership and more attentive national parties. This change would greatly benefit Iraq—another reason the Bush administration should push hard for provincial elections this year. That second turn at the urns at the national level is critical for cementing the democratic ethic in any country. The Bush administration needs to do everything in its power to help the Iraqis have robust, competitive national elections in 2009.

Despite the horrendous violence of 2006 and 2007, the Shiite commitment to the political system remains intact. The Shiite-on-Shiite killing since 2007 may have actually helped: The forces allied to Moktada al-Sadr have fared poorly in direct collisions with the Shiite-led Iraqi army and the Badr Corps, the military wing of SIIC, the best-organized Shiite religious party. Sadr plays more politics now than he did two years ago, when the destruction of the Shiite shrine at Samarra plunged Iraq into a bloodbath. Like his much beloved, murdered father, Sadr is throwing his movement into social work. There is still a big military potential to this—young men organized into self-help societies can be turned into paramilitary forces. But Sadr, at least in Baghdad and the central Euphrates valley, is recasting himself as a peaceful, die-hard anti-American patriot. He is reportedly trying to become a more accomplished student of Iranian religious jurisprudence, a sure sign that Sadr is politically stuck. He cannot humble himself to go to school in Iraq—his scholastic credentials are too weak, and he is too disliked by the traditional clergy to attend his country's great religious schools. So he reaches out to Iran, hardly a winning political strategy for one whose appeal lies partly in his fiery Arab-Iraqi nationalism.

And Sadr's principal antagonist—Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of SIIC—seems even more committed to the political process than Sadr. Hakim's uncle is one of the four grand ayatollahs of Najaf and probably the most influential after Sistani, the Iranian émigré who has become since 2003 the most beloved and respected ayatollah in the Shiite world. And Hakim himself has grown increasingly attentive to the concerns of Najaf since he returned from Iranian exile nearly five years ago.

With the possible exception of the prime minister, no Shiite politician is viewed as more accountable than Hakim for the successes and failures of the current government. If the Shia are unhappy with the government, the backlash could hit Hakim and his party fairly hard. The Najaf connection is his lifeline since Sistani, who has pushed and defined the democratic process more than anyone else, can guarantee that Hakim stays politically relevant even if popular dissatisfaction with the government grows. Given his personal limitations—he is neither an accomplished cleric nor a charismatic personality—Hakim is unlikely to derail the Bush administration or its successor with his personal ambition.

This said, one can wonder whether General Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker's decision to side so clearly with Hakim's Badr Corps over the disparate parts of Sadr's

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Mahdi army is astute. The SIIC's grassroots support may not be deep (provincial elections will help us know). Many faithful Iraqi Shiites have concerns about the SIIC's Iranian connections. Although its men serve in the Iraqi army, the Badr and the army are not the same. Iranian connections to the Badr are still strong—the ruling Iranian clergy has always put high value on nurturing foreign clienteles. General Petraeus is doing the best he can with too few troops, and picking proxies is an inevitable part of this surge.

Yet when Iraqis think about Hakim, they think first and foremost of his family's corruption and behind-the-scenes power. The Arabic word *Ittilaat*, "intelligence service," is often used to describe Hakim's SIIC. That's not a good sign. Militarily strong on the ground in the holy city of Najaf, Hakim and SIIC could envelop Grand Ayatollah Sistani, using both subtle physical intimidation and praise to ensure his support. Sistani is a cautious man; all lose in Iraq if he is de facto held hostage. It would be best not to tempt fate by fortifying too much the Badr Corps, an institution that could conceivably mutate into an Iraqi version of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, of which it once was part.

The immediate priority for the Bush administration should be to encourage the passage of a provincial-election law, then to speed the administrative preparations for a vote, which will take several months. These elections should breathe fresh air into Iraq's national politics and put purple index fingers again all over Middle Eastern television screens. Since the invasion, America's prestige has never been higher. The renewed mystique may not last. Many in Washington, especially inside the Pentagon and the leadership of the Democratic party, may resist holding provincial elections because they are likely to prevent big reductions in U.S. forces before 2010. But the president must realize this is probably a make-or-break issue for Iraqi democracy.

By the hair of his chinny-chin-chin, President Bush will probably leave office with a sputtering but functioning democratic system in Mesopotamia. Accepted wisdom now holds that the ripple effect from Iraq, if there is one, is all bad. In Europe this is mostly true. The loss of Tony Blair's Britain as a reliable and gutsy ally is perhaps the most regrettable by-product of Iraq in Europe. A second-rate military power, the United Kingdom was never going to be able to cope with a stressful, violent occupation. Our "special relationship" will continue, especially in the area of counterterrorism, where the United States has grown closer to every European security service since 2003. But Iraq has accelerated a distancing of American and British political elites.

In the Middle East, however, it is not clear that America's position has suffered that much from the invasion. Perhaps with Iran: More Americans might be willing to entertain the idea of preventive military strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities if the Bush administration had not done so poorly in Mesopotamia. But that issue aside, ripples from Iraq could still turn out to be more positive than negative, perhaps decisively so.

AL QAEDA AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM

Contrary to the views of most counterterrorism experts and most Democrats, the war against Islamic extremism has probably seen a pivotal victory in Iraq. Unlike 9/11 or the bombings in Madrid and London, the Second Iraq War, with its ferocious Muslim-on-Muslim violence, has actually provoked some deep reflection about holy war among the faithful in the Middle East. Although the situation could still unravel and Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia could get a new lease on life, the fight against that organization, and the Sunnis' second thoughts about their zeal against the Shia, have shaken Arabs' easy characterization of this war as a war against American occupation.

To begin with, Al Qaeda central—Osama bin Laden and his lieutenant, Ayman al Zawahiri—know they are in trouble. The war has produced a small epistolary avalanche of tactical recalculations and spiritual appeals to brother Muslims to focus the fight on American infidels. Iraq was supposed to break the United States. This was, in bin Laden's words, "a war over the destiny of the entire *umma* [the worldwide Muslim community]." Instead, Iraq is becoming a serious setback, if not a spiritual Waterloo, for the Muslim world's most feared and most respected jihadists. As bin Laden conceded about the Iraqi jihad, "Allah only knows what sort of ramifications it holds for Islam and its people."

In his December 29 declaration on Iraq, bin Laden savagely attacked Sunnis who are working with the Americans, calling them guilty of "clear infidelity and an open apostasy." Abu Ahmad al-Baghdadi, a spokesman for one of the Sunni insurgent groups, didn't buy this. He told Al Jazeera, the pro-Sunni, pro-insurgent Arabic satellite TV channel, that "Al Qaeda in Iraq has become a hand that destroys the Sunnis. Many Sunnis have been killed by them. Al Qaeda in Iraq is a source of corruption. . . . They always direct their weapons at innocent civilians." Al-Baghdadi had no difficulty throwing the Prophet Muhammad back at bin Laden: Why shouldn't Sunnis make a truce with the Americans when "the Prophet made a truce" with nonbelievers?

Commentary like this influences Muslim attitudes far more than all of America's public-diplomacy outreach; it is worth far more, too, than the soft-power appeal of any Barack Obama signaling his empathy with the downtrodden of the Third World.

Although Senators Obama, Hillary Clinton, and Joseph

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Biden would rather burn in oil than give George Bush credit for his insistence on linking the war in Iraq to the battle against Islamic extremism, the president has damaged al Qaeda—and al Qaeda has damaged itself—more in Mesopotamia than on any other battlefield. Al Qaeda will live on in the forbidding mountains of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and from there it may do horrendous harm to the United States and its European allies. But if al Qaeda is ever to evanesce, it will be because its jihadism lost its ethical appeal in the Arab heartland where it was born. American and Pakistani paramilitary successes against al Qaeda will never be sufficient to demonstrate the organization's evil to Muslims worldwide. Indeed, Pakistan's ineffectual attempts to assert control over tribal border areas have been counterproductive, giving bin Laden a fillip of hope at a time when his jihad is facing decided difficulty in Iraq.

By contrast, it is democracy in Iraq, as bin Laden correctly foresaw, that would be toxic to his cause: Few ideas elicit from him more venom. It is one of the great ironies of the war that President Bush, a man not known for perusing much primary material, actually did read bin Laden's declarations about Iraq and did consider his ideas. It is by no means clear Bush's antiwar critics ever have. We have not been able to counter the Egyptian and Saudi Arabian intellectual engines of jihadism against the United States; this would be difficult even if Bush's State Department actually tried it. But what we have done is help Iraqis grope their way toward democracy, even as al Qaeda's cruelty has rallied Iraqis to fight at our side.

American strikes inside Pakistan would roil our relations with the Pakistani military. Our intelligence cooperation with Islamabad would probably suffer severely. Even secular Pakistanis might rise in indignation. But what we're doing now is definitely not working.

Pakistani soldiers near the lawless town of Darra Adam Khel, in North-West Frontier Province, January 2008

AFP / GETTY IMAGES

AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

A year ago George W. Bush was the first American president to be on the way to losing two wars simultaneously. Now, he may be losing only one. The good news is that the administration knows it's in trouble in Afghanistan.

Even with the strain of Iraq, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates will likely increase troop levels sufficiently to parry the resurgent Taliban where it matters most. Afghanistan was always going to be an extraordinary test of American will. If the United States remains in Iraq for at least a decade (a pretty safe bet), it's likely to be in Afghanistan much longer.

Afghanistan is already proving too much for most of our NATO allies, who are hunkering down—and, in the case of the Spanish and Italians, "secretly" dealing with the Taliban in an effort to deflect violence from their troops. (One former senior Spanish official calls this "preemptive surrender.") With the mountainous tribal lands of Pakistan as a safe haven, Afghanistan's Pashtun Taliban—many of its members actually born in Pakistan's refugee camps and educated in its religious schools—was always going to recover. It is probably too late for President Bush to develop a new policy toward Pakistan. To do so,

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Regular public reports on Saudi missionary activity around the world would go a long way toward galvanizing Western and anti-Wahhabi Muslim awareness of what the Saudi state is doing. It's not too late for the American government to do this—Congress could require any administration to undertake such reporting.

George W. Bush sips tea with King Abdullah while viewing Arabian stallions during a tour of Abdullah's weekend retreat, Al Janadriyah Ranch.

SHAWN THEW / EPA / CORBIS

he would have to ignore the counsel of the State Department, the Pentagon, the CIA, and Washington's unofficial foreign-policy establishment, which remain more or less wedded to a pre-9/11 alignment of the United States with the Pakistani military—our "essential" but fragile ally against al Qaeda. We will soon see the denouement of our post-9/11 counterterrorist training of the Pakistani Army: Openly or discreetly, we must pray that it can wear down the Islamic extremists who control the tribal lands and are challenging Islamabad in the neighboring North-West Frontier Province.

A more effective, though nerve-racking, strategy would have had the United States use ground and air strikes inside Pakistan since 2002 to punish those aiding the rebirth of the Taliban. We should have been more focused on actually killing al Qaeda, the Taliban, and those in Pakistan who support them. Soon we could be in a worse position than we were before 9/11, with Afghan and Pakistani militants plotting and training without real fear of American harassment. Given the growing extremist presence there, the North-West Frontier Province may be destined to experience years of suicide bombings and insurgent attacks. This probably can't destabilize the entire country, but it can seriously stress the military and the intelligence services, where Pashtuns from the North-West Frontier Province disproportionately serve. No matter what we do, and no matter whether its government now becomes more democratic or more authoritarian, Pakistan is likely to experience increasing violence.

If undertaken at this late date, American strikes inside Pakistan would roil our relations with the Pakistani military and make life more dangerous for Americans living in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Our intelligence cooperation with Islamabad would probably suffer severely. Even secular Pakistanis might rise in indignation. On the other hand, what we have now is definitely not working. We will surely rue the day the United States allowed al Qaeda and its sympathizers a place to grow unmolested.

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As Britain's internal-security service, MI5, is well aware, the Pakistani connection is now the most worrisome nexus for al Qaeda to exploit, what with the enormous number of Pakistanis traveling between the two countries. According to British internal-security officials, every year upwards of 80,000 Pakistanis resident in the United Kingdom, many of them British citizens, visit areas of Pakistan that are "rich with jihadists." Other European countries also have Pakistani communities. The discovery of jihadist cells within them is becoming a regular occurrence.

So far, the Pakistani military has proven itself unwilling or unable to fight it out with Pashtun fundamentalists who live near the Afghan-Pakistani border. With America's strong encouragement, President Musharraf attempted to extend his writ into the tribal regions. He failed abysmally, watching Pashtun forces in the army and the frontier constabulary grumble and often desert.

Unless we deploy a lot more troops to Afghanistan to implement an "ink-spot" counterinsurgency akin to the one led by General Petraeus in Iraq, it's doubtful the United States and NATO can reverse the ascendancy of the Taliban among the Pashtuns. Since we don't want to invade another country, we will give the Pakistani army another chance to destroy al Qaeda and neutralize the Taliban. But if the Pakistanis don't do what is necessary in the next 12 months, they probably never will. And note: If Washington is reluctant to launch paramilitary strikes into northwestern Pakistan to kill members of al Qaeda and disrupt new terrorist training camps, it definitely isn't going to launch covert operations to neutralize Pakistan's nuclear weapons in the event the Pakistani army becomes too Islamic. The level of intestinal fortitude and the quality of intelligence required for the former is vastly less than would be required for the latter.

Still, there are grounds for expecting that Pakistan will hang together. Its history since 1947 has given the nation an identity that sticks. The lingering legacy of the British—an aversion to extremes—among both the civilian elite and the tightknit officer corps has usually kept Pakistanis from acting like the more brutal elites of the Arab Middle East. As long as the unique ability of the Pakistani army to absorb both secularists and Islamists within its ranks continues—a modus vivendi that has held since at least the 1970s—the country won't fall apart and its nukes are unlikely either to disappear into the hands of extremists or to get fired. It's impossible to overstate the extent to which Pakistan's fundamentalists loathe the polytheist Hindus of India. Yet the Pakistani military, a tough and fraternal organization, has kept the country from indulging its worst instincts and doing anything stupid with its nukes. Even occasional military strikes by American forces against Taliban and al Qaeda strongholds in the remote tribal areas of northwestern Pakistan would not crack this institution or its control of nuclear weapons.

We will see whether the Pakistani army, always the backbone of the country, is sufficiently wise to allow the people's continuing attachment to messy democratic politics the room to grow. Pakistan's political salvation is probably a long way off no matter what Washington does, but greater distance between the United States and the Pakistani military would benefit both parties. Although it's impossible for America's allies within the military to say so publicly, they would likely be in no worse position if the United States assumed the responsibility for necessary military operations in the tribal regions. Then the Pakistanis could join our enemies in damning us for violating Pakistani sovereignty, while leaving all concerned more secure than if the Pakistani military took on the emboldened Pashtun fundamentalists and lost.

PALESTINE, EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA, LEBANON, AND SYRIA

The Levant has not been kind to the Bush administration. On virtually every issue in this region, the White House has misfired, not fired at all, or been worn out by contradictory aspirations. The Israeli-Palestinian confrontation is as it was in 2000: an event controlled by the continuing Islamist evolution of the Palestinian people, who do not in sufficient numbers countenance peace with a Jewish state. The only real question remaining is whether the Fatah dictatorship on the West Bank will evolve quickly or slowly into a spiritual twin of Hamas. Contrary to what has been endlessly suggested by foreign-policy "realists," democracy did not destroy Fatah or undermine the chances for peace. Fatah destroyed Fatah. Westernized secular autocracies have similarly squandered their legitimacy throughout the Middle East ever since World War II. Elections will inevitably give expression to this failure.

No elected Muslim Arab government is likely to embrace Israel for many years to come. President Bush got the order backwards in his post-Annapolis speeches, suggesting that the Palestinians need to be able to envision a complete state living side by side with Israel so that democracy can triumph. Democracy did triumph among the Palestinians—Hamas won. Arab autocrats sign peace treaties with Israel; Arab democrats won't. That explains the Israelis' preference for Muslim dictatorship over Muslim democracy. Believing Muslims first have to figure out how to reconcile parliamentary legislation and the Holy Law; how to accept a Jewish state on land that devout Muslims see as part of the historic *umma* is much

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farther down this evolutionary path. Max Boot's parallel with the English and the Scots, who made war on each other for centuries, is apt—but the religious, social, cultural, political, and economic differences between the Jewish Israelis and the Muslim Palestinians dwarf the historic divide between Britain's warring peoples.

The preeminent issue for Palestinians, as for others in the region, is responsibility: Will Muslims become responsible for themselves, ethically and politically? Will they stop blaming others and blame themselves for their problems? It's very difficult to see how the Islamic, especially Arab, world can confront its manifest problems without Muslims, individually and collectively, assuming responsibility for their actions. Democracy is a good idea for the Middle East not because it will improve Western-Muslim relations. Odds are, in the short term, it will do the opposite. Increasingly, Muslims, especially devout Muslims, are backing democratic politics because they see this as the only way to restore legitimacy to government. Democracy, not dictatorship, opens societies to debates, which fundamentalists may well win. Elections that allow fundamentalists a chance to triumph—not police-state repression or antiterrorist pronouncements by the co-opted official clergy of the challenged regimes—are the key to eventually destroying the appeal of the violent extremists. As always, bin Laden is a helpful guide: If he loathes democracy among Muslims, it's a good reason to support it.

Hamas's triumph in the Palestinian elections of January 2006 probably put the last nail in the coffin of the Bush administration's efforts to encourage reform in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the two countries that drove the spread of modern Islamic radicalism. From the beginning, Bush's democracy-and-reform agenda was largely rhetorical, undermined consistently by America's deference to Saudi oil and the senior cadre of the State Department's Near Eastern Bureau who saw the status quo as a safer bet than the convulsive, unsettling world of representative politics among Muslims. Like those American supporters of Israel who have grown queasy at the sight of democracy on the West Bank and in Gaza, the State Department's senior Arabists see the current regimes as bulwarks against radical Islam. They may admit that these autocracies have helped to radicalize their populations through repression. They may be uncomfortable with the aid these regimes have given to conservative religious forces to thwart more radical religious groups. They may even be distressed to see Egypt's ruler, Hosni Mubarak, harass and jail liberal democratic dissidents and critics (though if the U.S. ambassador in Cairo, Francis Ricciardone, is upset by this, he's doing a good job of hiding it).

But they are unwilling to risk the unknown, which is what greater democracy would produce. For them, 9/11 did not change the world; it made one more argument for hanging on tight to the imperfect but "stable" world we had. The only thing they really want to export to the Muslim Middle East is security. Even though President Bush occasionally throws a rhetorical Molotov cocktail at this pre-9/11 "realist" understanding of the Middle East, in practice this view now defines his administration. Bush *fils* asking the Saudis, pretty please, to lower the price of oil could just as easily have been Bush *père*. Bringing democracy to Saudi Arabia understandably was never a priority for the Bush administration (there were better places to push). But the administration egregiously failed to challenge the Saudis on matters of faith.

Even the relatively moderate, state-supported version of the Saudi Wahhabi faith, derived from the severe Hanbali school of law, is inimical to what Muslims historically have considered mainstream. It is also organically anti-American. On a global level, it is more dangerous than anything that has ever come out of Iran. After 9/11, President Bush could have easily ordered the State Department and the CIA to track Saudi state-supported religious institutions and publications in the Middle East and the West. Regular public reports on Saudi Arabia—biennial unclassified National Intelligence Estimates on Saudi missionary activity around the world—would have gone a long way toward galvanizing Western and anti-Wahhabi Muslim awareness of what the Saudi royal family and the Saudi state were doing. It's not too late for the American government to do this—Congress could require any administration to undertake such reporting. Foggy Bottom and Langley would fight it strenuously since it would crimp their bilateral Saudi relationships. Today, in post-9/11 Washington, they have the upper hand.

Lebanon today, too, isn't what the Bush administration had hoped, and Syria and its principal Lebanese ally, Hezbollah, are once again gaining strength through murder and intimidation. Once Syria's dictator, Bashar al-Assad, realized that Bush's soft-power Cedar Revolution wasn't going to bring him down (and for a moment in 2005, he wasn't sure), Washington lost its ability to coerce and intervene.

America's retreat from democratic Lebanon has been somewhat counterbalanced by Israel's bombing raid against the suspected nuclear site near Dayr az-Zawr, in Syria, which surprised and silenced both Damascus and its key backer, Tehran. But even here, the reaction in Washington is distressing. The Israelis exercised preemption, and the Bush administration—which has made preventive war an official part of America's post-9/11 doctrine—remained silent. The administration seems little inclined to dispute Israeli intelligence, but even if it thought the Israelis were wrong about North Korean involvement in this suspected

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Democracy did triumph among the Palestinians—Hamas won. Arab autocrats sign peace treaties with Israel; Arab democrats won't. That explains the Israelis' preference for Muslim dictatorship over Muslim democracy.

Members of Hamas's military wing in Nablus, June 2006

ALAA BADARNEH / EPA / CORBIS

nuclear site, the signal from the raid is exactly the one the president and the vice president were trying to send the Iranians about *their* nuclear facilities if they didn't stop uranium enrichment. It's hard to imagine a more helpful event for European and American Iran diplomacy, with its good-cop, bad-cop approach, yet Washington let it fall flat. It appears the administration went easy on Damascus partly for the illusory promise of Syrian participation in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process—which shows how far it has reverted to a pre-9/11 understanding of the Middle East.

Iraq and the war on terror will likely save the president's legacy in the Middle East. Although his soaring pro-democracy rhetoric has often been nullified by the actions of his minions and the president's own misunderstanding of what democracy in action means in the Muslim Middle East, George W. Bush has probably changed forever how Washington views Muslims and their rulers. Many in Washington may still believe, as George Kennan did, that Muslims are suited to dictatorship. Publicly, however, that position is no longer acceptable. This is no small achievement.

An uneasy and healthy tension now exists between rhetoric and reality, guaranteeing that Americans will continue to debate what has gone wrong and right in the Muslim Middle East. Whether America escapes another 9/11 or not, the president deserves credit for understanding that the region's murderous anti-American extremists, both secular and religious, had to be confronted on the battlefield. Sanctions, cruise missiles shot at rock huts and empty intelligence-service buildings, and close liaison relationships with foreign internal-security services were not enough. If the United States is brutally struck again by holy warriors, President Bush will seem prescient and wise—about the need for reform in the Middle East's autocracies, about the strategic shortsightedness and immorality of pre-9/11 American foreign policy toward Muslims, and about the imperative to use ugly tactics against mass-casualty terrorists. Given the forces arrayed against him, his administration's failures, and his own limitations, these are achievements even Ronald Reagan would envy. ♦

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THE GERMAN WAY OF WAR

How two centuries of militarism came to an end on the Eastern Front.

GETTY IMAGES

By Robert Messenger

THERE IS A GERMAN WAY OF WAR. Its distinctive characteristic is the muster of overwhelming force and a rapid advance into enemy territory. The successive Prussian and German states were surrounded (and felt themselves threatened) by vastly larger ones and so aimed at short, decisive wars of movement: the *Bewegungskrieg*—though the term *blitzkrieg* is more common in English. To Germany's leaders, both military and civilian, the offensive must ever be immediately taken to force a decision before the geographic predicament could be made to bear.

The history of the Prussian and German state through 1945 is one in which war is the main outcome of national policy. It was the country's principal export over two centuries. War was more than just "politics by other means"; it was, as the Comte de Mirabeau noted in 1788, "the national industry of Prussia." Though he formulated it most neatly with his quip that: "Where some states possess an army, the Prussian army possesses a state."

The operational excellence of the German and Prussian general staffs is the stuff of hundreds of excellent military histories. But this brilliant style of war, shaped by geographic and historical circumstance, masked an unhealthy strategic shortcoming: an inability to see national war as the last resort, sometimes even an unnecessary one.

They forced war on other nations, and with the exceptions of the quick wars of unification against Austria in 1866 and France in 1871, their military skill battered their own state into submission. Frederick the Great began the Seven Years War by marching into Saxony; Wilhelm II sent his corps into Belgium and Russia in hopes of maintaining German industrial and social prosperity; and Hitler repeatedly used the army as the crutch for mounting the steps in his climb to global power. Each ended in disaster. The German state never existed as anything other than a militaristic enterprise, which is why its skill led to repeated defeat and, ultimately, to its own devastation in 1945. That this final devastation originated out of victory is only one of the many ironies of German history.

In April 1941, Germany was master of Europe. She faced only an isolated and nearly helpless Great Britain. With time and effort, Britain could call on imperial reserves, but, since the abandonment of Greece and Crete, she had no means of meeting the German army in battle.

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German motorized infantry entering the Ukraine during the first stages of Operation Barbarossa, 1941

Hitler had brilliantly employed both war and the threat of war to reach this height. Once he brought Britain to the peace table, created a permanent defensible barrier in the east, and settled the grand matter of Bolshevism, Germany would permanently dominate Europe and be—in Hitler's mind—one of three great global powers.

It was all bound up in Hitler's calculations. He felt that Britain fought on because she looked to the Soviet Union for eventual support. The Jews were behind it all and so he must settle all these questions once and for all in, yes, a rapid war of movement. The army would topple the Bolshevik regime, restore the terms of Brest-Litovsk, truly isolate Britain, and give the SS the scope for murdering and exiling the Jews.

The Greatest Battle
Stalin, Hitler, and the Desperate Struggle for Moscow that Changed the Course of World War II
by Andrew Nagorski
Simon & Schuster, 384 pp., $27

Moscow 1941
A City and Its People at War
by Rodric Braithwaite
Vintage, 448 pp., $15.95

Absolute War
Soviet Russia in the Second World War
by Chris Bellamy
Knopf, 848 pp., $40

That war would come in the east was never a question for Hitler or his generals. He had been calling for it from his earliest preaching. Less than a month after France formally surrendered to Germany, and with the preparations for an invasion of Britain underway, Hitler ordered the drawing-up of plans for an invasion of Russia in the spring of 1941. On December 18, 1940, Directive No. 21 authorized Operation Barbarossa.

The Soviet Union, too, was manically preparing for war, expanding the Red Army and producing innovative weapons like the T-34 tank and the Katyusha rocket-launcher. But Stalin did not want it to come for years. To keep the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact in place, he was fully prepared to make huge concessions in 1941. Stalin assumed all the rumors of war were German saber-rattling in hopes of gaining the Baltic littoral as a defensive barrier against Russia and some of the fertile land of the Ukraine. Hitler could have had a great deal for the asking: Stalin had calculated Hitler's objective correctly, but not the genocidal ambitions, and so failed to grasp that Hitler's principal instrument of state was an army. He negoti-

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Hitler following the campaign in Russia with Generals Wilhelm Keitel, Walther von Brauchitsch, and Franz Halder, September 1941

ated only if he thought the army was too weak to win.

The German invasion of the Soviet Union began on June 22, 1941. It involved three million men: 152 divisions in three army groups, 3,350 tanks, 2,000 airplanes, 7,000 pieces of artillery, 600,000 motorized vehicles, and 625,000 horses. The initial efforts matched such numbers. In three weeks, Army Group Centre advanced 400 miles and captured the whole of Belorussia. Russian armies lost nearly 5,000 tanks, nearly 10,000 artillery pieces, and 1,700 planes. The victories at Bialystok and Minsk were *each* comparable to the German victory over the combined French and British armies in May 1940.

German plans called for the destruction of the Red Army west of the Dnieper and Dvina Rivers—to prevent it from escaping into the hinterland of Russia—and the capture of Smolensk, the land bridge to Moscow. All went well, though the distances and the minimal Soviet infrastructure quickly caused trouble with the strategic schedule as the panzer divisions awaited the slow infantry and supplies. And Smolensk held out for 63 days.

Still, the German leadership was suffused with a sense of complete victory. Eleven days after the invasion began, the army chief of staff, Franz Halder, made a famous entry in his diary: "I am therefore not exaggerating when I say that the campaign against Russia was won in 14 days." This isn't the mad logic that it might seem in retrospect. The General Staff's rule of thumb was that a nation could produce two divisions (30,000 soldiers) for each million of its population. The Soviet Union prewar population was 190 million, and so should have produced an army of six million soldiers in 384 divisions. By September, Soviet dead and prisoners exceeded four million. In the first six months of fighting, the German army achieved 12—repeat, 12—great encirclements on a par with the victories at Sedan in 1871 and the Ardennes in 1940.

If Barbarossa had been a war game, all would have been over. Yet the Russians didn't play by quite the same rules. On August 11, Halder would write:

> Overall, it is clearer and clearer that we have underestimated the Russian colossus, which had prepared itself for war with an utter lack of restraint which is characteristic of the totalitarian state. This is as true in the area of organization as it is of the economy, the area of transport and communications, but above all to pure military power. At the start of the war, we reckoned on some 200 enemy divisions. Now we have already counted 360. These divisions are definitely not armed and equipped in our sense, and tactically they are in many ways badly led. But they are there.

THE GERMANS DIDN'T HAVE A WAY to win the war if the Russians were willing to keep fighting. The Barbarossa plan supposed that, if the army groups won big battles and the SS killed the intelligentsia in large numbers, the state would collapse. The problem of enemy capitulation as a strategy is that it requires not the killing of large numbers of your opponent's armies but the desertion of your opponent's soldiers. The Germans lost in 1918 because, after Erich Ludendorff's spring offensives failed and killed a huge number of German soldiers, the appearance of four million fresh American troops, fighting with an enthusiasm not seen on the Western Front since 1915, broke the morale of the German army. Governments lose the will to fight when they lose the way to fight, the contrast between France and Britain in 1940: The vast French army quit and the tiny British one did not.

Hitler and his generals were relying on the Russians' welcoming them as liberators. They believed in this so implicitly that they never bothered to gather the opera-

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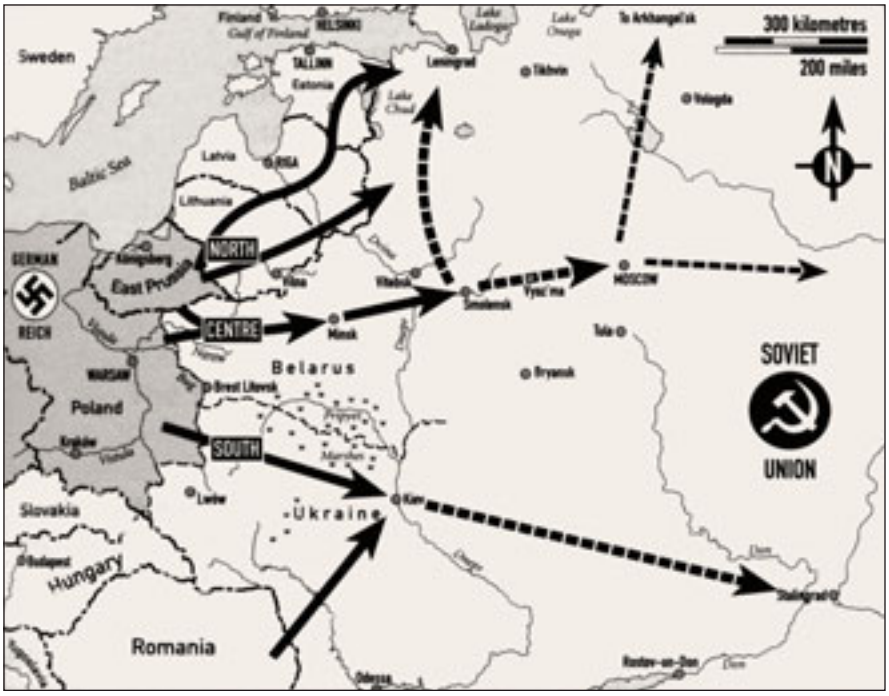
tional intelligence to discern if it was true. In his 1952 memoir, *Panzer Leader*, Heinz Guderian recalled an old Russian general in Orël after the city fell to his troops in October 1941: "If only you had come 20 years ago we should have welcomed you with open arms. But now it is too late. We were just beginning to get on our feet and now you arrive and throw us back 20 years so that we will have to start from the beginning all over again. Now we are fighting for Russia and in that cause we are all united." The Germans also made little attempt to win the hearts and minds of the Russians, diverting all resources in the captured territories back to Germany, executing hundreds of thousands, and leaving the rest to starve.



The German General Staff's final plan for Barbarossa as laid out in Hitler's Directive 21 on December 18, 1940—from Absolute War *by Chris Bellamy (Alfred A. Knopf)*

ALFRED A. KNOPF

This lack of a coherent strategic plan cannot simply be blamed on Hitler, as Germany's surviving generals were keen to do after the war. The Barbarossa plan, developed by the General Staff, called for a lightning three-month campaign that reached a line stretching from Rostov, along the Volga, to Archangel. This was from 750 to a thousand miles deep into Russia. There were no terms under which such a campaign was physically possible for an army that employed 3,350 tanks but 600,000 horses. Broken into three prongs, the campaign was successful in its most basic objectives—killing Soviet soldiers in battles of encirclement and executing Jews and subversive elements in the wake of the army's progress—but never came close to reaching its military objectives.

Germany's military leaders had been beguiled by success and by ideology. They believed Hitler when he said they would win easily, and they planned accordingly. Hitler fostered an air of competition amongst his military planners. It encouraged bold ideas and discouraged critique. As the German army was restored in the 1930s, its culture became politically aggressive as well. It was no longer focused on standing readiness to repel on two fronts—the culture inherited from Frederick—but employing *Bewegungskrieg* as an instrument of a global political policy. When Erich von Manstein's plan to invade France through the Ardennes proved breathtakingly successful, despite evidence that France was the stronger and better-prepared military power, hope replaced realistic expectation completely.

Barbarossa exposed the problem. The two dominant forces in the German state—Hitler and the army—achieved their purpose to no discernible gain. The Russians kept fighting, and the Germans kept getting further down the logistical road. The sheer success of the Germans in surrounding and cutting off Russian armies meant lengthy and costly mop-up operations—and underestimation of the problem of prisoners added to the troubles. The Russians may have been disorganized, badly led and armed, but they fought, and the toll of German machinery and men was increasingly burdensome. By August, the German advance had slowed from 20 miles a day to 5. It was obvious that the campaign could not continue on three fronts, and resources were focused away from Army Group Centre and the drive on Moscow to pursue the attacks on Leningrad in the north and Kiev and the Ukraine to the south, which would allow Army Group South to envelop Moscow from behind.

This is a moment much debated by historians. In their postwar memoirs, Germany's surviving military leaders propounded a theory that, by delaying the drive on Moscow, Hitler cost them the war. This "Lost Victory" is widely believed in and the stuff of popular military history books and the many what-if books the History Book Club likes to try to sell me: If only Hitler had allowed his generals to push forward, they would have been victorious.

There are two problems. The first is that the redirection was called for in the original invasion plan: A pause was viewed as necessary to reconstitute the divisions bat-

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A Russian home is searched by invading troops, 1941

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tered by the fighting and for the supply lines to catch up. The second is that there is no evidence that the capture of Moscow would have led to Soviet defeat. Yes, Moscow was the center of authority in a totalitarian country, but the regime survived other heavy blows. Moscow's industry had been moved east, and the Soviet government had planned for evacuation. Considering the battering German troops had taken in five months of fighting, and the weakness of supply lines, it is just as likely the Battle of Moscow would have been the 1941 version of the Battle of Stalingrad.

What's more interesting is how the Lost Victory thesis originated. In the 1950s, it began to look like the U.S. Army might have to fight over the same ground and against the same enemy as Hitler's army. American planners began accumulating reports from surviving German generals on how the fighting went. In all, 2,500 reports were written by 700 different generals in a project overseen by none other than Franz Halder. Beyond the U.S. desire for information, there was a secondary effort at rehabilitating the German army, establishing it as an entity separate from Nazism. NATO commanders wanted German help—in the form of a new German army, the *Bundeswehr*—defending Western Europe, and the founding of the *Bundeswehr* required officers from the old army.

The climate called for exonerating the German army. In stepped generals like Halder, Guderian, and Manstein, with bestselling memoirs that portrayed an honorable German military fighting bravely and being defeated by Hitler's madness, not Red Army troops. When Dwight D. Eisenhower was touring Germany as the first head of NATO in 1951, he issued a statement drawing a line between the German army and Hitler: "I have come to know that there is a real difference between the regular German soldier and officer and Hitler and his criminal group. For my part, I do not believe that the German soldier as such has lost his honor." (This is from the new *Myth of the Western Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture* by Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies II.)

The two-month pause before the assault on Moscow is the key to the Lost Victory theory. But it bears remembering that the German strategy for invading Russia was focused on destroying Soviet divisions. The campaigns in the north and south were huge successes. A case can be made that the envelopment of Kiev in late September was the greatest feat of German arms in any war. By early October, Leningrad and Sevastopol still held out, but they were sealed off by German troops and the regions around them were firmly in German control. The drive on Moscow, code-named Typhoon, was to begin again. But its goal was less the Soviet capital than the next good place to kill Russian soldiers.

Moscow was a place the Red Army was prepared to defend in force. Nearly two million German soldiers were mustered with 14,000 guns and a thousand tanks. The panzers went on the attack on September 30 and the main assault, by straight-legged infantry pulling their guns with horses, began on November 2. What followed was another pair of textbook-perfect battles of encirclement: Vyazma and Bryansk, where 1.25 million Soviet troops were cut off and more than a million captured or killed. The route to Moscow was open, the Luftwaffe was pounding the capital, and the Soviet leadership was struggling to find troops to defend it.

But the Germans were struggling, too. The Russian *rasputitsa* ("the time when roads dissolve") had set in, and it was increasingly difficult to advance at all, much less on a timetable, or to supply forward units. Even Hitler realized that the war would not be over in 1941. But instead of pulling back to defensive lines and preparing to wait out winter in safer quarters, the Germans pushed on: Generals like Hermann Hoth and Fedor von Bock wanted the glory of capturing Moscow, though Bock in his diary wondered how an army was to fight a war of movement when it took 24 horses to pull a single artillery piece.

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Typhoon ground to a halt until the winter came and freed the German army of the trouble of mud, but the Russian winter brought an astounding new set of problems: Guns jammed as their oils weren't viscous in such cold, fires had to be lit under a tank's oil pan each morning, and soldiers lacked winter uniforms. By mid-November, the Germans were only 40 miles from Moscow, but they were scarcely advancing thanks to stubborn Soviet resistance and the exhaustion of their ill-supplied troops. The Napoleonic resonance of being caught deep in Russia with winter coming on wasn't lost on Germany's highly intellectualized students of war.

Two of the German army's 625,000 horses at work in Russia, 1941

Nor were the German afflictions lost on the Soviet leadership, which sensed that the enemy was stretched to breaking. Soviet units had been able to hold their ground more tenaciously and use the superiority of the T-34 tank to advantage. The lull in fighting allowed them to bring more armored divisions from the Manchurian frontier. Stalin even dared to order the traditional public celebration of the Russian Revolution with a military parade in Red Square on November 7. Units marched in review and then straight on to the front.

The Red Army also had its first successes: securing the road over Lake Lagoda, Leningrad's sole supply line, and then on November 29 recapturing Rostov in the south. The stage was set: On December 4 and 6, the Russians counterattacked north and south of Moscow. The Germans fell back. For 34 days the Red Army kept up the attack across a front of almost 600 miles, forcing the Germans back between 50 and 150 miles. Hitler's order to soldiers to die where they stood, against his generals' advice, saved the situation, though at great cost. The German army lost a half-million soldiers and 1,500 tanks. Hitler purged the army's leadership and placed himself in direct control of operations.

The Russian counterattack was a stirring moment for a battered nation, and a great victory, but the Red Army still had another year of painful lessons to learn before it mastered mechanized warfare. The fresh troops from Siberia had dispersed an exhausted opponent, one almost beyond the power of resisting. When the Germans took the field again in spring 1942 they quickly won victories at Kharkov and Kerch as resounding as those of the first months of Barbarossa. What can't be overstated, though, is the difference of six months: When the lines stabilized at the end of December 1941, Germany was facing three enemies, two of which had nearly endless reserves to throw into total war.

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MOSCOW IS ONE OF THE DEFINING battles of World War II, the first legitimate defeat dealt to the German army. So it is hardly surprising that two new books focus on this epic encounter: Andrew Nagorski's *The Greatest Battle* and Rodric Braithwaite's *Moscow 1941*.

Braithwaite is a former British ambassador in Moscow, and the extent of his knowledge and engagement with the city and country is evident on every page. This is a marvelous portrait of a people taken to war by a barbaric regime against a barbaric invader. One of the heroes of *Moscow 1941* is Konstanty Rokossovski, the most able of the Soviet generals. He was denounced during the purges of the late 1930s, but refused to "confess"—even under torture. The case dragged on as they sought his confession until, in March 1940, he was released as part of a general amnesty for officers. Braithwaite repeats "an oft-repeated story." Called in to see Stalin, Rokossovski was greeted:

> "Well. Rokossovski, I don't seem to have seen you around for some time. Where did you get to?"
> "I was arrested, Comrade Stalin. I was sitting in prison."
> "A fine time you chose to go to prison!" Stalin laughed and got down to the business of the day.

Moscow 1941 is full of such moments. It is a work of mil-

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Russian corpses alongside a road, 1941

itary history that balances the social, artistic, and political. Andrew Nagorski is unfortunate in his timing, for his good book is completely overshadowed by Braithwaite's great one. Nagorski is a well-regarded foreign correspondent who knows Russia from his postings, but *The Greatest Battle* bears too many of the marks of journalism: treating oral history and archival with equal weight, jumping from the general to the specific and back, presenting the anecdotal in favor of the analytical. He has simply engaged less profoundly than Braithwaite, and his material is less integrated; the end result jumps hither and yon amongst subjects, some unnecessary. (Is a consideration of Hitler's and Stalin's sexual skills relevant, or pages on the family who embalmed Lenin?)

The place where Nagorski does score is in including the 1942 fighting where the Russians confronted dug-in German units. Stalin's expectation was to relieve both Leningrad and Sevastopol and win the war immediately. His troops suffered for the ambition. Nagorski is following Russian historians (and Marshal Zhukov's lead) in dating the Battle of Moscow from late September to the spring offensives, and he gives a fuller picture of the fighting before both armies settled down to await the spring thaw. (Where neither book scores is in depicting the great Soviet evacuation: More than 1,500 factories were packed up and moved by rail—and another 500 by truck—while trains moved 2.5 million soldiers to the front. It was an extraordinary feat, equal to anything done by the troops before Moscow.)

Nagorski and Braithwaite are both popularizers, part of the torrent of publishing on the war in the east which has followed the opening of Soviet and East German archives and the surprising international success of Antony Beevor's superb *Stalingrad* (1998). Popularizers build out archival scholarship with human interest from survivors' accounts and oral history. Sometimes this is done with originality and brilliance, but more often it just buries better works, whose main flaw is no longer being new. I think in this regard of the indefatigable David Glantz, a former U.S. Army officer who has spent decades bringing a critical mass of Soviet documentation on the war into English, including making translations of the Red Army staff's own studies of battles like Kursk and Lvov, and writing deeply detailed accounts of the Red Army at war. *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (1995) contains a first-rate operational narrative of Typhoon and the Soviet counteroffensives that isn't any less clear for being much shorter than Nagorski and Braithwaite.

(The majority of Glantz's books are published by the University of Kansas Press, which has a dynamite program of scholarship on World War II. One of their regulars is Robert Citino, whose *Death of the Wehrmacht: The German Campaigns of 1942* picks up where Nagorski and Braithwaite leave off, telling the story of the German army's recovery from the disaster outside of Moscow. It focuses on just seven months: from the phoenix-from-the-ashes victories at Kharkov and Gazala in May 1942 to the shattering defeats of December at Stalingrad and Alamein.)

IN ENGLISH, THE MODERN STUDY OF the war between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia began 30 years ago with John Erickson's *Road to Stalingrad: Stalin's War with Germany* (1975). With its follow-up, *The Road to Berlin* (1983), Erickson's remains the best—deepest, clearest—overall account of the war on the eastern front and can be recommended to any reader wanting to know how the war was fought. While the last 20 years have brought reams of information to light, they don't fundamentally alter Erickson's picture of the fighting.

"We knew, pretty well, how the war was *won*. But now we know infinitely more about how it was *run*." These are the words of a former student of Erickson's, Chris Bellamy, whose *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War* is a lively and resoundingly clear account of how the war was planned and managed. His interest is what set victory

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and defeat in motion for both sides, and his book is one of the very best single volumes yet written about the Nazi-Soviet conflict. It's an achievement made all the more impressive by Bellamy's willingness to share the credit: In his preface he refers to *Absolute War* as a "modern" history rather than a "new" one, as he acknowledges standing on the shoulders of Erickson and a great deal of ongoing archival and scholarly work in both German and Russian.

Absolute War is not a full picture of the war: We are on page 497 of a 690-page book when the battle for Stalingrad begins. Bellamy emphasizes 1941 and 1942, as these were the years when the course of the war was set and are most informed by the latest scholarship. Bellamy's focus is on leadership and decisionmaking, and it complements Erickson's books in every way. Bellamy is particularly skilled at presenting troves of information and analysis in digestible fashion:

Russian refugees walking east after the German invasion, 1941

> In terms of the Second World War as a whole, it could be argued that Stalingrad was not the turning point because once the United States became involved, Germany had no chance of winning, anyway. From that point of view 7 December 1941, whether in eastern front terms, with the Moscow counteroffensive, or in global terms, with Pearl Harbor, was the turning point. However, from December 1941, while it had gained a breathing space, Russia could still lose—or just collapse, as by all the normal rules it should have done in 1942. Stalingrad was the last of a series of checks, which progressively narrowed German options. The first was Smolensk, in July 1941, which fatally delayed the German advance. The next was Moscow in December 1941. Then there was the evacuation and re-establishment of Soviet industry—the "economic Stalingrad." Next came Hitler's decision in July 1942 to split Operation *Blau* [the summer 1942 offensive] and, furthermore, to let himself be diverted to the lesser aim of capturing Stalingrad, rather than the Caucasus, the oilfields, and access to the wider world. At each point there was less room for maneuver. After the catastrophic defeat at Stalingrad, with German forces and those of their allies stretched to the limit, there was no hope of a German victory in the east.

If I have any complaint, it is that Bellamy has a weakness for deadpan comments: "The Japanese did their own, ill-advised version of Barbarossa, and attacked the greatest military and industrial power of the twentieth century, the United States. A bad move, as it turned out." Or "He was not a happy field marshal." This overwriting tic disturbs an otherwise excellent text, though it is more than offset by one of the great boons of recent military history publishing: *Absolute War* has a sufficiency of maps. Here, in the depths of Russia where they are most needed, a publisher—three cheers for Alfred A. Knopf—has spent the money on dozens of operational maps.

What comes through on every page of *Absolute War* is the utter inhumanity of the German-Soviet war. The Germans began in barbarism and the Russians replied in kind. The numbers are difficult to digest. The German army left 4 million men on the battlefields of Eastern Europe, but they killed 27 million. The Red Army lost 11.5 million soldiers, and 15.5 million civilians died in the territories occupied by the German army. Nearly 10 Russians died each minute that the war lasted, 14,000 each day. Bellamy quotes the words of a German lieutenant describing the Battle of Stalingrad: "Animals flee this hell; the hardest stones cannot bear it for long; only men endure."

In his November 6, 1941, speech marking the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, Stalin vowed that the Soviet Union would give back in kind: "The German invaders want a war of extermination against the peoples of the USSR. Well, if they want a war of extermination, they shall have it."

Moscow was still under threat as he spoke, but Stalin's vow would be fulfilled. In four years of terrible slaughter, the Red Army did not just defeat Hitler and National Socialism, but also put an end to Prussian militarism. It was a Soviet victory over something that had menaced Europe for two centuries. Stalin was a barbarous man, and in the end, that is what it took to finally draw the curtain on the German Way of War. ♦

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'Washington Resigning His Commission' by Edwin White

America at Birth

Independence is won. Now begins the hard part.

BY EDWARD ACHORN

Everybody who knows anything about history knows that the Revolutionary War ended with the defeat of the British at Yorktown, in 1781. But everybody is wrong, as Thomas Fleming spells out engagingly—if not always judiciously—in *The Perils of Peace: America's Struggle for Survival After Yorktown.* In fact, America faced bitterly hard times after the battle that spoiled Great Britain's southern strategy. The United States could well have lost the war even after Yorktown, in large part because the Americans' will and ability to fight were collapsing almost as fast as those of the British.

The Perils of Peace
America's Struggle for Survival After Yorktown
by Thomas Fleming
Collins/Smithsonian, 368 pp., $27.95

George III himself was slow to get the point. Initially, he viewed Yorktown as a momentary setback. "The events of war have been unfortunate to my army in Virginia, having ended in the loss of my forces in that province," he told a slack-jawed Parliament. "But I retain a perfect conviction of the justice of my cause." He also retained armies in control of New York, Charleston, and Savannah, poised to snap shut on the wayward colonists in between.

His Majesty might have actually persuaded Parliament to fight on had television and the Internet existed in the 18th century: Men of that era got their information months after the fact, in ways that often precluded a bold and effective response. What the war-weary Parliament did not know is what Fleming lays out here: The United States was itself exhausted and bankrupt. Its Congress was bitterly divided, dispirited, and incompetent, and its 13 states were precariously united at best. Its hungry and tattered army, owed back pay that the country had no means of providing, was at the point of open mutiny.

While General Washington firmly resisted calls to seize control of civilian authority and set matters aright, he had no good idea of how to feed and clothe his men. America's economy was in shambles, and many (most?) citizens, fed up with the extraordinary carnage and cost of this seemingly endless conflict, wanted

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MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES

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the war to end yesterday, if not immediately. In that context, the signing of the Treaty of Paris securing America's independence two years later was little short of a miracle—or, as some Founders saw it, a sign that divine providence was at work in the creation of the United States.

Many books have been written about America's "rancid" politics, post-Yorktown, while others have treated the peace negotiations in Europe. Fleming contends that *The Perils of Peace* is the first to explore "the often hair-raising interplay between these dramas." Hair-raising it is, and Fleming, a successful fiction writer as well as historian, keeps the tale moving, employing his considerable storytelling talents. He paints memorable characters in few strokes, and puts the reader right on the scene, from the cold and hungry American camps to the glittering palace of Versailles.

You would think a book about the American Revolution that focuses more on political maneuvering in sitting rooms than stirring battle scenes might be on the tedious side. You would be wrong. But I *was* distracted by one of Fleming's stylistic tics: Reading along, I could not help but notice the characters (and their written works) seemed to be repeatedly described as furious, ferocious, and filled with rage: "Morris wrote a ferocious letter. . . . This blast of rage was written by twenty-four-year-old Major John Armstrong. . . . [H]ot-tempered Major John Armstrong was expressing the fury many officers felt. . . . [T]he infuriated young major. . . . Exploding with rage, Adams wrote to Robert R. Livingston. . . . In a ferocious pamphlet, Burke claimed. . . ." And so on.

More troubling is the author's cartoonish treatment of Benjamin Franklin as a paragon of wisdom, moderation, and common sense, and his fellow diplomat (and future president) John Adams as a mere foil, a meddlesome radical to the point of being nearly disastrous to the American cause. Franklin, of course, offered one of the most memorable (and accurate) glosses on Adams when he observed: "I am persuaded that he means well for his country, is always an honest man, often a wise one, but sometimes and in some things, absolutely out of his senses." Adams, for his part, feared that the Revolution would be reduced by future historians to an over-glorification of Franklin and Washington (at the expense of such major figures as Adams, of course): "The essence of the whole will be that Dr. Franklin's electric rod smote the earth and out sprang General Washington. That Franklin electrified him with his rod—and thenceforth those two conducted the policy, negotiations, legislatures, and war."

After Yorktown, Great Britain's war-weary Parliament did not know that the United States was itself exhausted and bankrupt. Its Congress was bitterly divided, dispirited, and incompetent, and its 13 states were precariously united at best. Its hungry and tattered army, owed back pay that the country had no means of providing, was at the point of open mutiny.

Just as Adams feared, Franklin seems to get the full godhead treatment here, while the man from Massachusetts is portrayed as a gaffe-prone intruder and member of a diabolical congressional conspiracy that seems hell-bent on destroying the kindly, randy doctor for no better reasons than jealousy and spite. Fleming cannot even send poor Adams off to dinner without injecting a note of mockery, as when the Comte de Vergennes, the French foreign minister, "treated the cranky puritan to a feast of fine wine and succulent food that left him burping contentedly all the way back to Paris."

A more scrupulous historian might have thought twice about slinging around the word "puritan" in regards to Adams, who had in fact stepped away from the puritan tradition in his religious beliefs and habits of thought. A more nuanced—and surely more interesting—evaluation might have taken into account that Adams, though a thorn in the side of Vergennes, had a point in warning that America should be wary of securing independence from the British at the price of utter dependence on the French. And that Adams, by writing such terrifically indiscreet (and wonderfully human) private letters, subjected himself to greater risk of being parodied and pummeled by historians than his less honest and forthright contemporaries.

Indeed, Adams's life of high achievement, and his deft work in keeping America from going to war either with France or Britain during its feeble early years of his presidency, suggests there was a good deal more to the man than meets the author's narrowing eye. Still, the good here—the sprightly writing about events on two continents during a little-appreciated period of vast importance to the world—significantly outweighs the bad. Fleming's account culminates in Washington's moving farewell to Congress (which would surely inspire a "blast of rage" from the ACLU) as he lays down his power as general and retires to private life: "I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life by commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God and those who have superintendence of them, to his holy keeping."

The general's own moderation and virtue were far from the least of the blessings bestowed on America in these years. As the events of *The Perils of Peace* make clear, if God did not have a hand in this most improbable and hair-raising story, we were, at the very least, awfully lucky. ♦

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More in Sorrow

For Bernard Malamud, fiction was the hard road to Truth. **BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN**

Saul Bellow used regularly to refer to himself, Bernard Malamud, and the considerably younger Philip Roth as the Hart, Shaffner, and Marx of American literature. The comment, as often with Bellow, is a loaded one: Loaded with suspicion about the acceptance of Jewish writers in America, with contempt for those critics and readers who tended to lump the three distinctly different writers together, and with resentment for his being reduced to the status of a writer of chiefly ethnic interest.

Bernard Malamud
A Writer's Life
by Philip Davis
Oxford, 388 pp., $34.95

Certainly, the three writers are easily enough distinguished. Saul Bellow was the virtuoso of the sentence, the comical physiognomical detail, the brilliant cityscape, the high philosophical schmooze, and less than strong on plot. One doesn't read Bellow for the story; at the end one is never quite sure what the story was. One reads him for Bellow himself, in the same way that one didn't go to a Yehudi Menuhin concert to hear Mozart but to hear Menuhin. Philip Roth has always been a writer most happy when *épaté*-ing Jews, Gentiles, and whoever else happens to be free at the moment; in his fiction, sex is always waiting in the wings, ever ready to present itself center stage, which sooner or later it generally does. He is the man, as he put it in *Portnoy's Complaint*, who has attempted to put "the Id back in Yid."

The fiction of Bernard Malamud is quite a different dish of *kreplach*. His fiction possesses greater gravity than that of either Bellow or Roth. His themes—guilt, redemption, the urge for the beginning of a newer, fuller life—are more in the line of the great 19th-century Russians. In *My Father Is a Book*, a memoir of her father, his daughter Janna Malamud Smith compares Bernard Malamud's fiction to that of another Russian, the painter Marc Chagall. "Like the painter born a generation earlier," she writes, "the writer also, at a greater remove, carried tales of the *shtetl*, had familiarity with Yiddish folk literature, found freedom in fables, and could capture in a short story a seemingly naïve moral complexity in which studiedly simple words evoked deep feeling."

"How much feeling have you got in your heart?" Malamud claimed was the question that a serious writer must always ask of himself. He seems to have had a vast quantity. Much of Malamud's feeling was acquired through his own difficult upbringing. Born in 1914 to Russian immigrant parents, he lived upstairs of their Mom and Pop grocery store in Brooklyn. Max and Bertha Malamud's life in America was the reverse of an immigrant success story: Everything his father touched turned to sawdust; his mother, diagnosed as schizophrenic, died at 41, in a mental hospital, when Malamud was 15. When he was 13 he returned one day from school to find her on the kitchen floor, her mouth foaming from poison she had just swallowed. His younger brother later turned up schizophrenic, and he, too, died, in a mental hospital.

Such was Bernard Malamud's early life: scarred by mental illness, poverty, sad immigrant ignorance, with a major economic depression looming in the background. Malamud's wife Ann said that her husband's "leitmotif" was that "Life is sad." The title of one of his darkest stories, "Take Pity," could stand as a rubric over much of his fiction. A relentless worker, Malamud revised and polished and burnished his stories and novels. He believed in revision as a form of truth seeking: find the precise words, cut away all that is extraneous, put enough pressure on each sentence, and with luck the truth, filtered through the powerful lens of storytelling, will emerge.

Along the way, Malamud developed an unmistakable style, a use of language sometimes referred to as Yinglish, a combination of English words and Yiddish syntax and sentiment. "Where would he drag that dead cat, his soul?" runs such a line from the story "The Girl of My Dreams." From the same story: "He stared unbelieving, his heart a dishrag." A character in "Take Pity" says: "Kiddo, this is a mistake. This place [a grocery store like Malamud's father's] is a grave. Here they will bury you if you don't get out quick."

A magical realist *avant la lettre*, Malamud combined fantasy with realism in writing that was both comic and heartbreaking. Black Jewish angels show up, and just as mysteriously disappear. Census-takers are treated to stories of human tragedy. A man very far down on his luck prays: "My dear God, sweetheart, did I deserve that this should happen to me. . . . Give Fanny back her health, and to me for myself that I shouldn't feel pain in every step." Characters have faces "whiplashed with understanding." A woman has a left eye that "also looks sadder than her right eye." A character in the story "A Choice of Profession" to himself says, "It's not easy being moral"—which may be the chief message of all Bernard Malamud's fiction.

Malamud's wife and children—along with his daughter, he had a son—quickly enough grasped that his work came first. Janna Malamud Smith didn't title her memoir *My Father Is a Book* for no reason. She reports that the moral instruction offered *chez Malamud* was: "Read, value art, seek education and experience, attend to others,

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shelter the vulnerable, and try to treat each person fairly. The underlying big message was, 'Work to overcome yourself.'" Disciplined work was Malamud's religion.

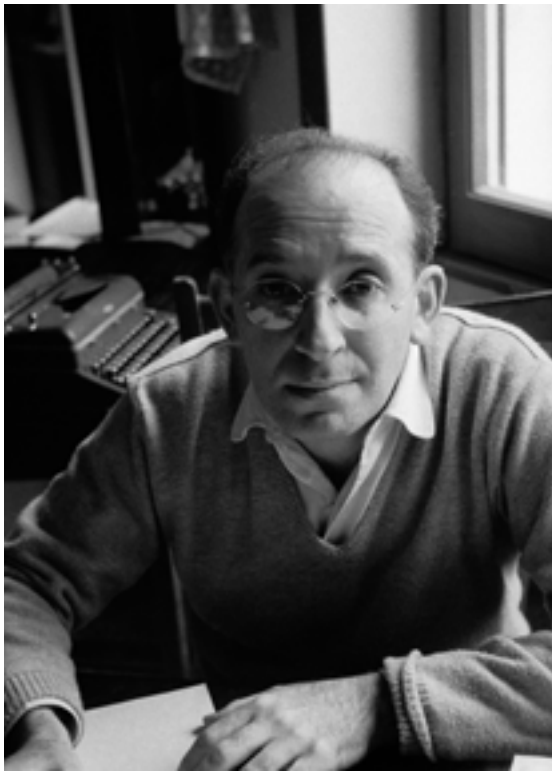
So much was Malamud at his desk that Roger Straus, his publisher at Farrar, Straus, thought a biography of him wasn't merely impossible but ridiculous. "Everything was up here, in the head," Straus said, "nothing down there. . . . As a life it was unexciting." Malamud's biographer Philip Davis, who quotes Straus saying this, gets around the publisher's objections by living up to his biography's subtitle and producing "A Writer's Life." This is above all a book about a man working at his writing: About the frustrations, the subtleties, the rewards of working at storytelling. "My own view," writes Professor Davis, a literature don at the University of Liverpool, "is that any biography that seeks to 'see in' and thus do justice to Malamud should learn from the fiction, from its methods as much as its contents, and then direct its readers back to it."

Malamud thought half-a-page not at all a bad day's work. He wrote in longhand, leaving space for his inevitable rewriting. He began each morning reworking what he had written the night before. He viewed every sentence as a sculpture. He had longhand pages of a completed story or chapter of a novel typed by his wife or a hired secretary.

"Then," according to his daughter, "he would rewrite. And rewrite. Usually two or three times, occasionally into the double digits of drafts. His sentences and paragraphs were hard won, the result of considered thought and constant revision. He understood that his success had come from 10 percent talent and 90 percent hard work."

Professor Davis writes out of deep admiration for Malamud's fiction, which doesn't blind him to his human flaws: clogged feeling, an artist's selfishness, vanity. He senses (correctly, I believe) that Malamud's reputation is in decline, his popularity waning, and he writes to change this unjust condition. He seeks, as he writes, "more recognition and more readers for Malamud in the future."

"Too often where Malamud is still remembered," Davis writes, "it is for a handful of great short stories; but, wonderful as many of those stories are, I want most of all to make the case for the novels." The problem with this case is that it is tied directly to the very reasons for the decline of Bernard Malamud's reputation. Malamud's last three published novels, *The Tenants* (1971), *Dubin's Lives* (1979), and *God's Grace* (1982), were books that didn't really come off. Reviewers felt this, and so did the best of all critics, ordinary readers. People who loved—not in this instance too strong a word, I think—Malamud's earlier novels and brilliant stories were beginning to give up on him, thinking he had lost the magic that was earlier his. I was myself among them.



Bernard Malamud, 1957

DAVID LEES / CORBIS

I wonder if, perhaps, a more accurate description of the trajectory of Bernard Malamud's career than Philip Davis's wouldn't be one that attempted to explain how so good a writer as Malamud wrote three such off-the-mark novels late in his artistic maturity? If I am correct about this falling-off, Malamud's last good novel—I happen to believe it is a great novel—is *The Fixer* (1966).

For the young Bernard Malamud, as for the children of so many immigrants of that time, education was the only way out. Fortunately, he was good at school; even more fortunately, he had a few teachers who saw something extraordinary in him. He went to Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn, one of the superior public schools of its day. He socialized easily enough with his middle-class schoolmates, but at night it was back to the dreary apartment above the hopeless grocery store. In a nice detail, Janna Malamud Smith notes that her father acquired his first bathrobe and slippers at the age of 26.

City College of New York, the famous CCNY, home of nascent Trotskyites, Shachtmanites, and Stalinists, was Malamud's next stop, though he seems not to have been greatly caught up in politics. After CCNY, he worked as a substitute high school teacher and also taught nightschool; he did a master's degree at Columbia. He moved to Washington, where he earned a meager living as a census taker. During this period, he published some prose sketches in the *Washington Post* and also sold a few radio scripts to the Bulldog Drummond detective series. After a lengthy courtship, he married Ann de Chiara, whose Italian parents weren't pleased with her choice; his own father, meanwhile, ceased to speak to him for marrying a Gentile, and only relented years later when presented with the news of a grandson.

Ann Malamud helped Bern, as she and his friends called him, send out some 200 letters seeking a college teaching job. The only one that struck a positive response was that sent to Oregon State College in Corvallis, where he was hired to teach freshman composition. This most Brooklynite of men,

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intellectually intense, passionate for art, must have seemed anomalous, to put it gently, at what was then a school that specialized in agriculture. One of his students, reminiscing, reported: "I think he felt Oregon was a foreign country." Malamud's father, in good New York fashion, seemed to confuse Oregon with Oklahoma. Malamud himself tried to colonize Corvallis through culture, helping to form a foreign film society, a Great Books discussion group, an arts theatre. He taught creative writing courses in the evenings to local residents.

The years he spent in Oregon, 1949-1961, despite all the cultural deficiencies of the college and the town, were to prove decisive for Malamud's literary career. He wrote his first published novel *The Natural* (1952) in Oregon; during this period some of his most memorable short stories were printed in *Partisan Review*, *Commentary*, and *The New Yorker*, later to be collected in *The Magic Barrel* (1958); he completed *The Assistant* (1957), his novel based on the honorable sadness of his father's life in his hardscrabble Brooklyn grocery store. He began to win the awards—a Yaddo fellowship, the National Book Award, a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship that permitted him and his family to live for a year in Rome—that brought him to national prominence.

Soon after leaving Oregon State for a much cushier teaching job at Bennington, he wrote *A New Life* (1961), a brilliant comic novel about a wild Jewish loser teaching English at a cow college in the northwest who gets a new start in life when he runs off with the wife of his department chairman. *A New Life* sounds like a novel with a strong anchor in autobiography. It is, and it isn't. Malamud was no S. Levin, as the book's hero is named: He wasn't, like Levin, a former alcoholic, nor did he run off with anyone's wife, as does Levin. But, here as elsewhere, what Davis's biography helps us understand is how Malamud made use of his life's experiences: It deepens one's appreciation of his stories and novels by demonstrating how he transmuted his experience into art.

Robert Redford in The Natural *(1983)*

Malamud's experiences were not wide—he often expressed the wish that they had been—but he wrung everything out of them for his own artistic purposes. Unlike other writers—Bellow comes notably to mind here—Malamud didn't put close facsimiles of actual people in his novels in order to repay old (sometimes imagined) injuries by destroying them in print. Of contemporary writers, Malamud may have relied on invention, on pure imagination, more than any other. His stories are filled with invented widows, relentless matchmakers, miracle-working rabbis. Two of his novels, *The Natural* and *The Fixer*, are entirely imagined, even though the latter is based on the imprisonment in czarist Russia of a Mendel Beilis, a Jew who was superintendent of a brick factory, falsely charged with the ritual murder of a Christian child.

Life changed decisively for Malamud when he moved to Bennington College in Vermont. Bennington was one of those radical schools of the 1940s and '50s—Bard, Antioch, Reed were some of the others—where, as a wag (me, actually) once put it, students spent the months of January and February off campus as members of the opposite sex. Bennington was different from these other schools in having all female students. Bennington girls were thought to be rich, neurotic, and libidinous as all outdoors. Bennington was hard on family life, and it would prove to be so for the Malamuds.

Malamud completed *The Fixer* during his first five years at Bennington. In the novel a relatively simple man named Yakov Bok, a Jewish handyman, spends three years in a czarist prison cell alone with his imagination, trying to work through the questions of human existence, not least among them why there is so much suffering and injustice in the world. *The Fixer* is a book that requires the utmost attention on the part of its readers, but richly repays it. Malamud believed that suffering can make one wiser, and so Yakov Bok, through lonely hard-won lucubration, becomes. "There's no such thing as an unpolitical man," the hitherto unpolitical Bok concludes, "especially a Jew. You can't be one without the other, that's clear enough. You can't sit still and see yourself destroyed."

The Fixer is a book of the sort for which the Nobel Prize was designed. The novel didn't win it, but it did win a Pulitzer and Malamud's second National Book Award. The reviews were ecstatic. *The Fixer* was made into a movie directed by John Frankenheimer and starring Alan Bates. Malamud was earning serious money. Studies of his fiction began to appear in academic journals. Bernard Malamud was now regarded as a major writer.

And yet, somehow, he never regained his stride. Earlier, he had said, "I have not given up on heroes. I simply use heroic qualities in small men." Nor did he like it when his characters were thought *schlemiels*, bumbling losers, without dignity, meant only to suffer. The reason so many of his characters are put to such suffering, he claimed, was that "in suffering the self is con-

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templated as it had never before been contemplated." A student of Malamud's during a summer session he taught at Harvard recalls his teacher's distaste for what he, the student, calls "the Delmore Schwartz syndrome, the Herzog syndrome, certainly the Portnoy syndrome." He told this student, apropos of writing stories, "Have the insight to recognize the neurotic patterns, and the integrity to break them."

Soon after the 1960s were underway, Bernard Malamud lost his way and gave up writing about the kind of small-scale heroes that gave his fiction its magic. The sixties generally was not a good decade for him. He had a love affair with a Bennington student nearly 30 years younger than he; and Malamud, being the earnest man he was, took the affair with great seriousness. He must also have felt under the false commandment for writers to change, expand, grow, cut loose, let 'er rip.

In his novel *The Tenants*, written during the last part of the sixties, Malamud took on the subject of race. A black and a white novelist are the last tenants in a building about to be torn down, and their rivalrousness, as writers and over a woman, is at the center of the book. But the black writer doesn't ring true, the woman in the novel feels tonally wrong; the novel just doesn't come off.

Neither did *Dubin's Lives*, Malamud's account of the affair of a married biographer with a woman 33 years younger than he. Played as comedy, this might have been a rich novel. But Malamud couldn't have played it any straighter. Now that, through the offices of Davis, we know about Malamud's love affair with his student (Malamud's daughter, too, writes about it in her book), *Dubin's Lives* reads like an *apologia*, though not a very persuasive one. "Middle-age," William Dubin thinks, "is when you pay for what you didn't have or couldn't do when you were young." *Dubin's Lives* reads as a self-pitying novel, heavily laden with clichés about youth: "With this girl I know the flowering pleasure beneath innocence, of the natural life," Dubin thinks. And: "One recovers of youth only what he can borrow from the young." How sad—not the plight of the book's hero but the descent of Bernard Malamud, that most conscious of artists, into unconscious pathos.

God's Grace (1982) was Malamud's last published novel. A fantasy, it is about life after nuclear war between the Djanks and the Druzhkies (the Yanks and the Russkies, one supposes) has killed every human being but a paleontologist named Calvin Cohen who was in a bubble at the bottom of the sea with a chimpanzee when the weapons were fired. Once on land, Cohen encounters other chimpanzees and apes and sets out to reestablish a new community of the peace-loving on earth.

"There is nothing so fatal as a good vast subject," says a character in Sybille Bedford's novel *A Legacy*, and so this one proves for Malamud. A writer whose wonderful stories so often suggested fable now writes a fable without an interesting story to go with it. Four years after this novel Malamud died, at age 72, of a worn-out heart, but he seems to have died as a literary artist long before.

The received opinion about Bernard Malamud is that he was best as a writer of short stories, and this opinion is probably correct. He himself defined the short story as "dramatizing the multifarious adventures of the human heart." Not many writers—Chekhov, Isaac Babel, Isaac Bashevis Singer—did it better. In his stories, no matter how dark his subject, his comic genius came alive, and when it did, so did his characters, whereas in the longer form of the novel his innate glumness seemed to win out.

Philip Davis calls Malamud "great" because he understood the struggle of limited men who discovered themselves in limitless difficulties, and chronicled their struggle to play—one does not speaking of winning—through against impossible odds. Malamud was such a man, and his struggle with his art turns out to be no less poignant a story than one he himself might have written. ♦

Bodies in Emotion

'What does she mean by that?' The mystery is solved.

BY JOE QUEENAN

Every once in a while an author comes along who can not only change our lives, but save our lives. Marcel Proust is one, Kahlil Gibran another. To their august ranks can now be added the prescient, wise Tonya Reiman.

The Power of Body Language
by Tonya Reiman
Pocket, 352 pp., $25

I say this because of an event that occurred one recent, glacial winter night when I found myself in the parking lot outside Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. I'd been given tickets to a basketball game between the Philadelphia 76ers and the New Jersey Nets, and for reasons that still worry me, had accepted them. Arriving at the Izod Center, which stands a few hundred yards away from the stadium both the Giants and Jets call home, I learned that the multilevel parking lot adjacent to the arena was full. A cop told me to cross the bridge that spanned the highway, park in the lot next to Giants Stadium, and take a special bus back to the Izod Center.

It was an awful lot of work to see two crummy teams play a crummy basketball game.

The parking lot was relatively empty, with just a handful of cars clustered in one area. Emerging from

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my vehicle, I realized that I was not alone. A few yards away sat two pickup trucks, surrounded by nine men and three women. They were wearing New York Giants regalia, drinking heavily, and making a fair bit of noise. They were tailgaters, getting tanked up a full 18 hours before the Giants played the Chicago Bears the next day. The game was to be played 700 miles away at Soldier Field. The Giants were not expected to win.

In short, I was parking my car a few yards away from a dozen drunks who were tailgating for a game that would not even be played in the stadium outside which they were partying, and would be returning to the same spot in a virtually empty lot three hours later, by which time the hypothermic Giants fans would have consumed even more alcohol, and worked themselves up into an even more bellicose mood. Moreover, I was wearing a Philadelphia Eagles cap. So I wisely got back into my car, drove off and deposited it all the way over on the other side of the parking lot.

A few months ago—naive, trusting sort that I was—I would have parked my car right beside the belching, marauding Giants fans assuming that people are basically good and that my vehicle was less likely to be stolen if it was parked near other cars. But armed with the skills I'd acquired by reading Reiman's electrifying volume I realized that there was something about those fans that wasn't quite right.

Having mastered the murky "paralanguage" that enables human beings to read secret messages transmitted by other people, I knew that the section of the brain called the *amygdala*, which detects fear in other humans, had been activated in the tailgaters' skulls as soon as I emerged from my car, and that they could literally smell vulnerability and victimhood-in-waiting.

I knew this because the *mirror neurons* in my *right parietal operculum*—yes, those very same neurons identified by Giacomo Rizzolatti and Vittorio Gallese in their breakthrough work at the University of Parma in 1996—were enabling me to crack the mysterious code conveyed by the body language of the boozed-up Giants fans. And what the "secret signal decoder" that my mirror neurons were arming me with were saying, was this: "These clowns look like mean drunks. Take off the Eagles cap, and get the hell out of here."

I did not start reading *The Power of Body Language* specifically to handle situations like this; I read it because I thought if I mastered paralanguage, and paid more attention to input from my right parietal operculum, it might help me figure out when John Edwards was lying, when Mitt Romney was telling the truth, and when Fred Thompson was awake. And so it did.

Reiman, a brilliant, charismatic body-language expert who appears regularly on *The O'Reilly Factor*, has advanced a revolutionary theory that only 7 percent of communication between human beings is verbal, perhaps even less in northern New Jersey. The other 93 percent is expressed in a kind of skeletal, epidermal, neurological, abdominal, and physiognomic code that most people cannot understand because they are paralinguistic illiterates who have not read her book.

Armed with the latest cutting-edge data from such publications as *The Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, *Dermatological Surgery*, and *The Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*, Reiman makes a convincing case that when women cross their legs, it is often to draw attention to their bodies, and that jiggling your car keys or playing with your water bottle cap may send a message to another person that you are not interested in having a sexual relationship with them. (This is probably even more true if you are doing it while in bed with them.)

Reiman also contends that an upper lip raised in a sneer may be a sign of contempt, and maintains that upbeat people are better liked than mopers. As she puts it, in her deceptively authoritative way: "Numerous studies have found that people who smile are believed to be more warm, honest, polite, kind, sociable, happy, flirtatious, successful and attractive."

Not one study, mind you, not two studies, but *numerous* studies.

Those who do not feel like wading through an intensely technical, occasionally abstruse volume filled with discussions of such exotic constructs as the "Pinocchio Effect" should turn to the back of the book, where Reiman answers a number of "frequently asked" questions that have perplexed mankind since we first emerged from the caves.

"Is it true that men who put their thumbs in their belt loops are more prone to be perverts?" she asks, rhetorically. No, is the answer—though regrettably she does not address the corollary: "Is it true that men who put their thumbs in *your* belt loops are more prone to be perverts?"

Yet by far the most intriguing subject is broached by the anonymous social leper who queries: "I have a problem. In general, people take an immediate dislike to me before I have even spoken. I can sense the atmosphere. Please don't say it's my imagination. I often think maybe I give off bad vibrations, and they detect it."

How Reiman got Hillary to participate in this book is beyond me. ♦

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Brian Mulroney, Ronald Reagan, 1988

DIRCK HALSTEAD / TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

Life of Brian

A comfortable breeze from north of the border.

BY MICHAEL TAUBE

In June 2004, the former Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney spoke at Ronald Reagan's funeral. The two men had become good friends while in their respective offices. They shared not only an Irish working-class background, but also a similar vision of democracy, liberty, and freedom. As Mulroney said, Reagan was "the leader we respected, the neighbor we admired and the friend we loved. . . . Ronald Reagan was a president who inspired his nation and transformed the world."

For many Americans, this was the first real exposure they had to Brian Mulroney. Even though this former prime minister had shared the world stage with powerful leaders, and was involved in issues that earned international coverage, Mulroney's legacy in the United States rested squarely with a few politicians, business leaders, think tanks, and publications.

Michael Taube, columnist and commentator, is a former speechwriter for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

But there is now a way for American readers to become acquainted (or reacquainted) with Mulroney: through his autobiography, *Memoirs: 1939-1993*. To be fair, it's a hefty volume with a significant portion dedicated to his role in Canadian politics. At the same time, it's a well-written and important book by one of Canada's most interesting, colorful, and controversial leaders.

Memoirs: 1939-1993
by Brian Mulroney
Douglas Gibson, 1,152 pp. $50

Brian Mulroney grew up in a non-political family. His parents, like many postwar Atlantic Canadians, traditionally supported the Liberal party; but when Mulroney attended St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, he was approached to join the campus Progressive Conservative (PC) party. He acknowledged that PC ideology was "compatible with my own views" but was more struck by "the challenges that membership would represent." The Liberals had been in power for 20 years, and Mulroney likely saw an opportunity to help initiate political change in a country that was starved for it.

Even early in his political career, Mulroney was industrious and ambitious. He joined the PC youth executive committee, and helped John Diefenbaker win his 1957 and 1958 federal election victories. (The latter campaign stood as the biggest landslide victory in Canadian history—until Mulroney topped it in 1984.) In the early 1960s Mulroney's political connections allowed him to work briefly in Ottawa as private secretary to the agriculture minister, and he maintained those connections when he went to Laval University in Quebec and became a lawyer.

But Mulroney's role in the PC party, and his views on a successful political formula for conservatism in Canada, were starting to change. Like other party members, he had become disillusioned with Diefenbaker, who was "increasingly alienating both young voters and French Canadians." It became so bad that the party chairman, Dalton Camp, issued a leadership review and ultimately led a rebellion that toppled Diefenbaker. This period of political turmoil taught Mulroney a valuable lesson: "Caucus solidarity is indispensable for long-term success and only the leader can bring that about, provided he works at it relentlessly." It was a lesson that he would carry with him throughout his political career.

After a few years practicing law, Mulroney ran for the federal PC leadership in 1976. He had never served as a member of Parliament, and did not have strong popular support. But he was an inspiring speaker, and wanted to make an impression: As he said in one speech, "Democracy is best served by challenge and change; politicians become true public servants only when they understand the limitations of power and acquire the humility that accompanies defeat."

Mulroney put the focus squarely on rebuilding his party and working towards defeating the "one-party state" that the Liberals had created in Canada. Mulroney ultimately lost the leadership fight to Joe Clark—then a fierce political rival, later a political ally—but had given party members something to think about for the future. When Mulroney came calling again in 1983, the PCs stood up and took notice. He defeated Clark in the leadership race.

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This gave Mulroney the chance to travel the country and speak not only to PC supporters but potential voters. He was seen as a fresh face beside Clark—who had served as prime minister for a mere eight months—and especially compared to Pierre Elliot Trudeau, the left-wing Liberal prime minister.

In the 1984 federal election, Mulroney described his philosophy to attain political success:

> It didn't matter to me if you had supported me in the leadership or not. I wanted everybody inside the PC tent. It didn't matter if a candidate or strategist or poll worker hated me or loved me. That was irrelevant. I was the leader and I was going to be prime minister if I could energize the entire party and then the country.

That was the beginning of the Mulroney coalition. He brought together Blue Tories (right-leaning conservatives), Red Tories (left-leaning conservatives), and Canadians from all regions. He ran a brilliant campaign, crushing the Liberal leader John Turner and exposing Liberal weaknesses at every turn. And he won an incredible victory: 211 out of 288 parliamentary seats, and 50 percent of the popular vote.

The Mulroney years (1984-93) were an astonishing period in Canadian history. Mulroney patched up his differences with former opponents—Clark, John Crosbie, and Michael Wilson, who had run against Mulroney for the PC leadership—and all played prominent roles in Mulroney's cabinet. As he writes, "I was determined to work closely with the former prime minister and his key supporters to ensure that any leadership-race bitterness was banished and forgotten. My overriding goal was to build a strong, united government that could win elections and face challenges at home and abroad in times of crisis." And his government remained united until the end.

Mulroney's greatest success was achieving the historic free trade deal (NAFTA) with the United States, which was later extended to Mexico. He increased the role of private enterprise in Canada, and made the country desirable for foreign investors. He was an environmentalist, and signed an agreement on acid rain with the first President Bush. He was a driving force in ending apartheid peacefully in South Africa. He forged strong relationships with other leaders—Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Helmut Kohl—and repaired Canada's mediocre reputation as a player on the world stage.

He also faced innumerable challenges. His friend Lucien Bouchard, who he brought into federal politics, ultimately betrayed him and helped form a separatist political party, the Bloc Québécois. The Reform party, under the leadership of Preston Manning, blossomed and began to challenge the PCs for conservative support. He "rolled the dice" twice with the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords as a means to bring Quebec back into the constitution—and was unsuccessful both times.

When Mulroney retired in 1993, he said, "I did not always succeed, but I always tried to do what would be right for Canada in the long term—not what could be politically popular in the short term." To his credit, these memoirs reflect that view. He advertises his successes, but is brutally honest about his failures. The *Memoirs* are the man. ♦

God's Advocate

Dinesh D'Souza goes the distance with the atheists.

BY PETER WEHNER

In the last few years we have seen a spate of bestselling anti-God books from a group of prominent writers and first-rate minds, including Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, and Christopher Hitchens. These men, deeply hostile to religion in general and Christianity in particular, are also formidable debaters. Last fall, I attended a debate in which Hitchens carved to pieces a leading Christian theologian who conceded far too much, defended his faith far too little, and sought common ground where none exists.

What's So Great About Christianity
by Dinesh D'Souza
Regnery, 348 pp., $27.95

Dinesh D'Souza has seen the same thing. "Precisely because the Christians usually duck and run, the atheists have had it too easy," he writes. "Their arguments have gone largely unanswered. They have been flogging the carcass of 'fundamentalism' without having to encounter the horse kick of a vigorous traditional Christianity."

D'Souza's horse kick comes in the form of this new book. And quite a kick it is. D'Souza offers a persuasive, scholarly, and intelligent rebuttal to the main charges made by those who proudly carry the banner of atheism. And unlike the work of some leading atheists, D'Souza's book is blessedly free of rancor and reckless statements.

It is also filled with interesting and surprising facts, especially regarding the demographic shifts in global Christianity. For instance, D'Souza notes that Christianity is the fastest-growing religion in the world today (although Islam is the fastest-growing religion in Europe). In 1900, more than 80 percent of Christians lived in Europe and America; today, 60 percent live in the developing world—with more than two out of three evangelical Christians now living in Asia, Africa, and South America. Today there are more churchgoing Presbyterians in Ghana than in Scotland. Christianity is thriving in China and India, nations

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which have the fastest growth rates in the world—and at current growth rates, China will, in a few decades, become the largest Christian country in the world.

"The vital centers of Christianity today are no longer Geneva, Rome, Paris, or London," D'Souza writes. "They are Buenos Aires, Manila, Kinshasa, and Addis Ababa."

But the core of D'Souza's book is a systematic response to the main arguments put forth by contemporary atheists and the historical figures on whom they rely. D'Souza sets out to demonstrate seven things: First, Christianity is the main foundation of Western civilization and the root of our most cherished values. Second, the latest discoveries of modern science support the claim that a divine being created the universe. Third, Darwin's theory of evolution strengthens, not undermines, evidence for supernatural design. Fourth, nothing in science makes miracles impossible. Fifth, it is reasonable to have faith. Sixth, atheism, not religion, is responsible for the mass murders of history. And seventh, atheism is motivated not by reason but a kind of "cowardly moral escapism."

All seven arguments are worth examining—but it is on the issue of evolution, Darwinism, and morality that I found D'Souza's discussion most interesting. He distinguishes between evolution, a scientific theory which is not hostile to religion, and Darwinism, which is a "metaphysical stance and a political ideology." (D'Souza believes in the former and rejects the latter.) When Darwinists like Dennett invoke evolution as an "all-purpose explanation in cosmology, psychology, culture, ethics, politics, and religion," D'Souza writes, they go far beyond the evidence. And in appropriating Charles Darwin's name, they actually do a disservice to it.

Evolution explains a great deal, but it is a theory with inherent limits. For one thing, evolution cannot explain the beginning of life, and Darwin didn't even attempt it. And among the limitations on evolution is that it cannot explain human rationality or morality. Of all the differences between man and the lower animals, Darwin said, the moral sense (or conscience) is the most important.

Leading Darwinists like Dennett, Dawkins, and Steven Pinker, D'Souza tells us, attempt to explain morality as a product of evolution and natural selection. What appears to be altruism is actually a genetically programmed strategy for survival and reproduction.

> Thus the theory of "kin selection," a form of genetic selection, provides an explanation for why we behave more altruistically toward relatives than strangers. It has to do with ensuring our genes get passed to the next generation. And the theory of "reciprocal altruism," developed by the biologist Robert Trivers, argues that it will benefit an animal to behave altruistically towards another if there is an expectation of the favor being returned in the future. The cost of an altruistic act is off-set by the likely benefit of a future favor. Morality, then, is based on self-interest.

Yet, as D'Souza points out, the entire framework of Darwinist analysis does not come close to providing a comprehensive account for morality. We frequently see examples of people acting morally and against self-interest; in fact, we hold a special place of honor for those who die while trying to save people whom they have never met. The late Ernst Mayr, a leading evolutionary biologist, admitted that "altruism toward strangers is a behavior not supported by natural selection."

Beyond that, we should ask: On what grounds does a person who does not believe in God make the case for inherent human dignity and worth? How does one create a system of justice and make a compelling case against, say, slavery if you begin with three propositions: the universe was created by chance, it will end in nothing, and there is no external source of authority to which to resort?

If you are a materialist, how do you derive a belief in a moral law that is binding on you and others? How do you get from the "is" to the "ought"? And how do you respond to a Nietzschean who tells you "your belief is fine for you, but it is not binding to me. God is dead—and I choose to follow the Will to Power"? An atheist may disagree with this Nietzschean sentiment, but he has no persuasive philosophical or moral ground on which to make his stand.

Even supposing that human beings have a moral sense based on evolution, why choose to follow it? After all, we have lots of instincts—some noble and some base. Why choose the more noble ones, like cooperation and sympathy, fidelity and fair play? Why not use your power against those you have authority over? Why not rig the game in order to advance your own self-interest?

This does not mean atheists cannot live ethical lives or advocate moral principles. Many do. It's just that they cannot anchor it in anything durable (an appeal to "human solidarity" won't do the trick). Another reason for this is parasitic. Certain religious precepts are now part of our social DNA. And so we take it for granted that, as the Founders said, all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. We believe, as Abraham Lincoln did, that "nothing stamped with the Divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on, and degraded, and imbruted by its fellows." The moral atheist certainly exists, but it is because he lives in a society that takes a transcendent morality for granted. If the atheistic enterprise were to prevail, these beliefs would be unmoored—and the moral world it would create would be barren and bleak.

In the end, of course, atheists are not attacking simply a religious institution or set of theological beliefs; they are attacking a person, and not just any person. The target of their wrath is the most compelling figure in human history, a man full of grace and truth. What drives this animus toward Christ is hard to fathom; perhaps it is the notion of the perfect dying for the imperfect. In any event, their unceasing invective is less shocking than it is tiresome and even childish.

The Apostle Peter wrote to his fellow Christians, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." Dinesh D'Souza, a Christian born in India and educated in America, has provided the reason for his hope. That he has done so in such a comprehensive and impressive fashion is a testimony to the quality of his mind and the depth of his faith. ♦

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YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS SILLINESS, MAHMOUD. LOOK TO ME. LOOK TO ME NOW! I DO WHATEVER YOU DO! THE REST OF THESE INFIDELS ARE TOO PROUD TO WEAR THESE MAGICAL GLASSES. THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE MISSING! BUT YOU AND I KNOW WHAT THEY WILL SOON BE MISSING—THEIR HEADS! YOU AND ME, MAHMOUD. TOGETHER. PLEASE TURN AND LOOK MY WAY. I BEG OF YOU! YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wears 3-D glasses during a visit to the control center for Iran's space program near Tehran, February 4, 2008.
REUTERS / FARS NEWS (IRAN)

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